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Family, Farming, and Military Service at Darvills, Virginia, 1965-1967: An Application of Methodology in Community Studies

Lisa Jordan

Virginia Commonwealth University

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Family, Farming, and Military Service at Darvills, Virginia, 1965-1967: An Application of
Methodology in Community Studies

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
History at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

Lisa Vaughan Jordan
Bachelor of Arts – Virginia Commonwealth University, 1995
Master of Teaching – Virginia Commonwealth University, 1995

Director: Dr. John Kneebone
Associate Professor – Department of History
Second Reader – Brian Daugherty
Third Reader – Elizabeth S. Hodges

Virginia Commonwealth University
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ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF METHODOLOGY IN COMMUNITY STUDIES

By Lisa Vaughan Jordan, M.A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2010.

Major Director: Dr. John Kneebone, Associate Professor – Department of History

This thesis examines correspondence between a mother, Alma Irene Vaughan and her son, Ammon Cliborne Vaughan from Darvills, Virginia, in the rural Southside area of the state, written during 1965-1967 when the son was stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in the Army. In addition to presenting a background of rural southern history and insights gained through the study of these letters, the thesis also includes a historically edited transcription of the letters, as well as those of other members of the community and/or family. It also includes oral history interviews with surviving participants and those connected to this period through the correspondents. The first chapter presents a broad historical background of the rural South as it relates to this community and the lives of these individuals. The second chapter examines the process of historical editing, including history, practice and methods involved in the editorial process. It also includes the editorial method of the process of editing the letters in detail. The third chapter discusses the research methodology involved in the oral history component, including validity, methods of analysis, and presentation of data. The fourth chapter contains selected transcriptions of both the letters and interviews, providing annotations as footnotes. Chapter five concludes with an analysis of insights gained through the study of the Vaughan letters relating to rural southern history and the process of documentary editing.

Chapter One: Introduction - The Beginnings

Coming home, coming home, Nevermore to roam, Open wide thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home.

-Baptist hymn of invitation and acceptance

It seems odd to be opening a thesis in a personal way. If you had asked me years ago about working on a project based on family and community, the reply would have put a sailor's vernacular to shame. For the better part of my life, the struggle has been to escape the rural background and family ties that seem at times to strangle me to death. In a sense this has been a homecoming of sorts. A supposed attempt at bringing peace to a community and family that has seen better days.

At one time, so I'm told, Darvills was a bustling place in Southside Virginia. There were businesses, farms, and homes scattered throughout the area. Now, the once vibrant scene has transformed into a ghost town of sorts. Many of its members have passed on, and others left for opportunities. Today, there are but a handful of those remnants of prominent families. Most of them have aged to the point that they remember too much or too little of its heyday. Churches now perform perfunctory services and rites, with a congregation whittled down to the bare bones. There are no ball fields, stores, or even farms any more. Homes have decayed or disappeared under the brush grown up around them. There is a story worth telling – an example of a locale's struggle against odds and those behind it.

The notion to begin this project took approximately fifteen years to develop. During my earlier days in college, several of my southern history courses inspired me to take a new look at how material had been presented. My previous perspective of what history was as a discipline was altered and one assignment in particular laid the foundation for what would become this

thesis. Dr. James Moore, former professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, encouraged us to go out in the field and interview individuals we had grown up with and determine whether our perceptions about youthful events would be altered. This was the beginnings of oral history for me. In the end, I created a video with the background music “Small Town” from John Mellancamp and produced a montage of interview, landscape, and narrative that, looking back, I realize must have been unusual both in terms of medium and topic. Years later, Dr. Moore told me he had never forgotten it. Anyway, time passed, and life goes on. Those things were long forgotten. It was not until I inherited letters, photographs, and other materials upon my father’s passing that those old urges and curiosities began to creep up on me again.

Those materials have sat in storage for over a decade. Then, new circumstances in my life contributed to a sense of urgency, a “now or never” moment. After several discussions with Dr. Moore, he assisted me in returning to school just a few short months before he died. This loss could have easily been the end of this whole experience. Instead, it fueled my desire and commitment to proceed with the telling of a legacy that was burning inside me. Letters, photographs, medals, you name it – all of these overlooked treasures once again found new life. It is my intent to share with you, the reader, a history of a place through the life stories of its people. Methods of oral history and documentary editing have been employed, along with numerous primary and secondary resources to fashion a new vision of what a local history can look like. I hope you will come away from this not only knowing about a dot on a map or the ups and downs of one family, but also with a true sense of how local history can be crafted.

No bones about it, my ties to the place are strong. There is no escaping the fact that I was born there, raised there, and immersed in a rural culture many would either ignore or ridicule. My own family has been involved in the area for at least two hundred years, possibly more. We

are as much a part of Southside Virginia as the soil itself. Although this intimate connection to my subject would naturally raise eyebrows in the academic world, it is an asset to my attempt to create an authentic understanding of the area and the challenges people there faced. I have wrestled with the arguments about subjectivity and its impact on credible research. In the end, my determination is that all work has elements of truths and untruths. Here I present the reader with the narrative as I understand it after literally years of poring over accounts and actually living it. More than a decade since my father died and even longer for others, enough time has passed that each can be defined more objectively through the lens of historical analysis.

The people discussed here are not perfect, but perfectly flawed. What they did, believed, and shared gives special insight into not just ordinary lives, but lives in a specific time and place. This passage of time affords one the ability to accept many elements because they can be evaluated in context. Therefore, this family's experiences and documentary records can be used as an example of how to do local, intimate history. Using the historiography of the time and place and understanding the crucial impact of changes set into motion, the reader will be able to formulate a version of what life meant in rural Southside Virginia in the mid-1960s. The burden is upon me to provide the reader with the tools necessary to make sense of these components. In essence, it is interaction between the academic discipline and the passion for a locale that ultimately creates this thesis. This is my legacy to the field, to my family, and to Darvills, Virginia.

CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE SCENE - BACKGROUND

This chapter provides you, the reader, with background information you need to understand the material in the letters and discussed by the interviewees. It begins with maps of the location and continues by providing specific information on its landmarks. Unless otherwise stated, the locations mentioned are all within the state of Virginia. All characters discussed have been categorized by relationship to the Vaughan family and are presented both in chart format and as an annotated list. This offers the ability to quickly reference individuals and also read further about the lives of those people if needed or desired. Photographs of many of the frequently named individuals are incorporated as well in an effort to build a visual image of this community. Finally, in order to explain the influence of broader forces on the locality, the historiography and literature review wraps up this chapter.

MAPS AND LANDMARKS

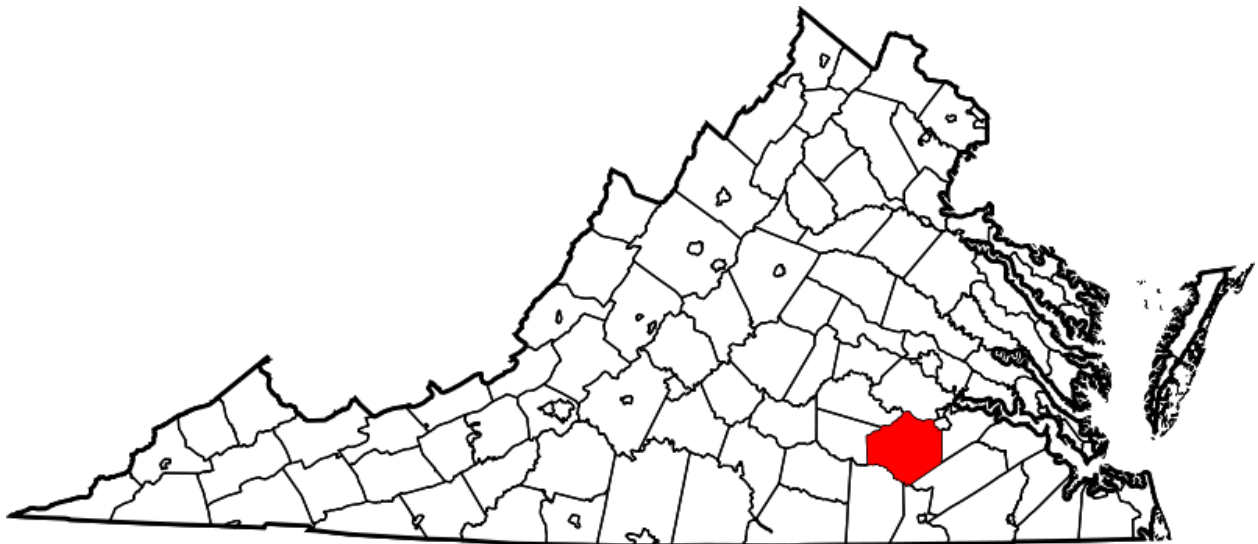


Figure 1: Map of the State of Virginia with Dinwiddie County Highlighted in Red



Figure 2 Map of Darvills, Virginia – It is approximately where the first “T” in the “Dinwiddie” label is written. Notice that it is close to the border of Nottoway County and Fort Pickett Military Reservation. Both the towns of McKenney and Blackstone are ten miles away in each direction on Route 40.

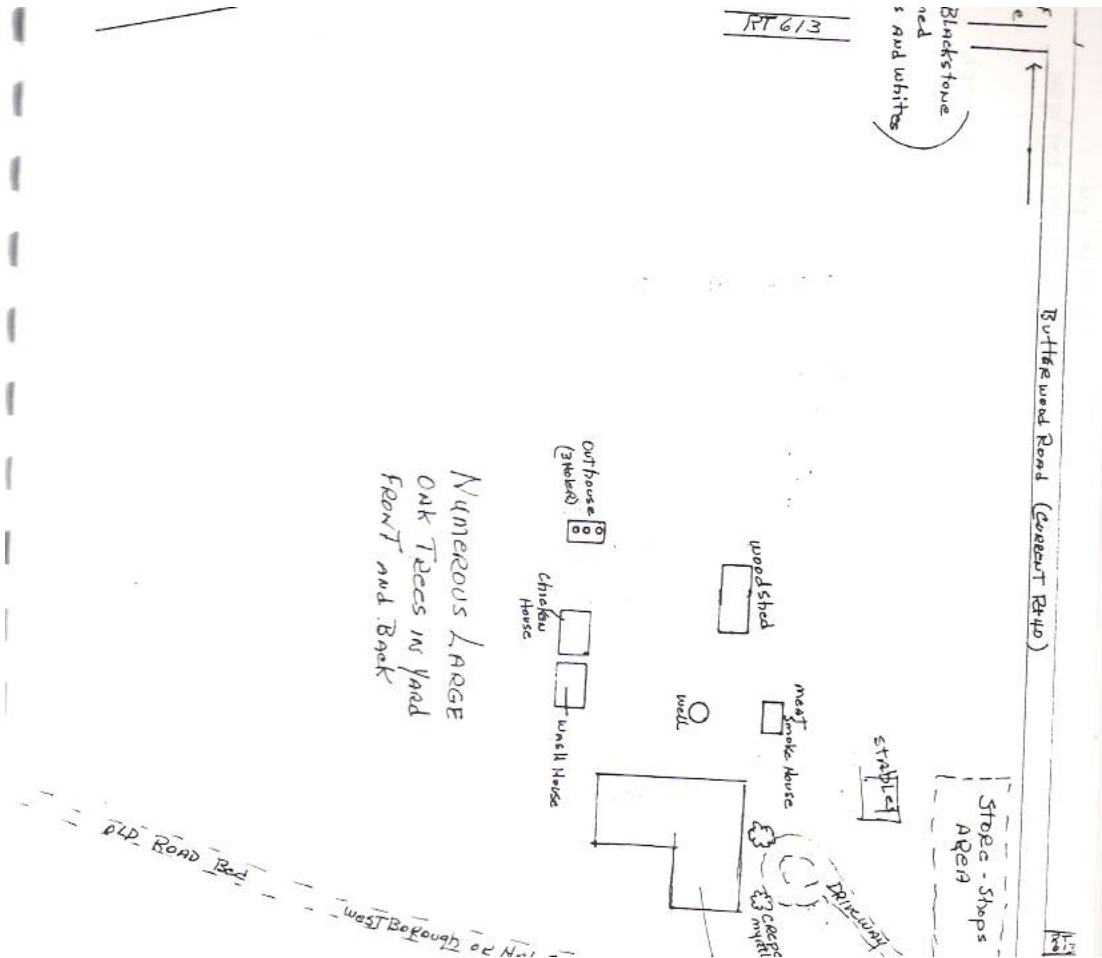


Figure 3: Hand drawn map of the Darvills area with emphasis on the Vaughan family property. This was completed by Raymond Vaughan, Jr. in the late 1990s based on his childhood memories. It is included in a bound volume of family history materials circulating around its various members.

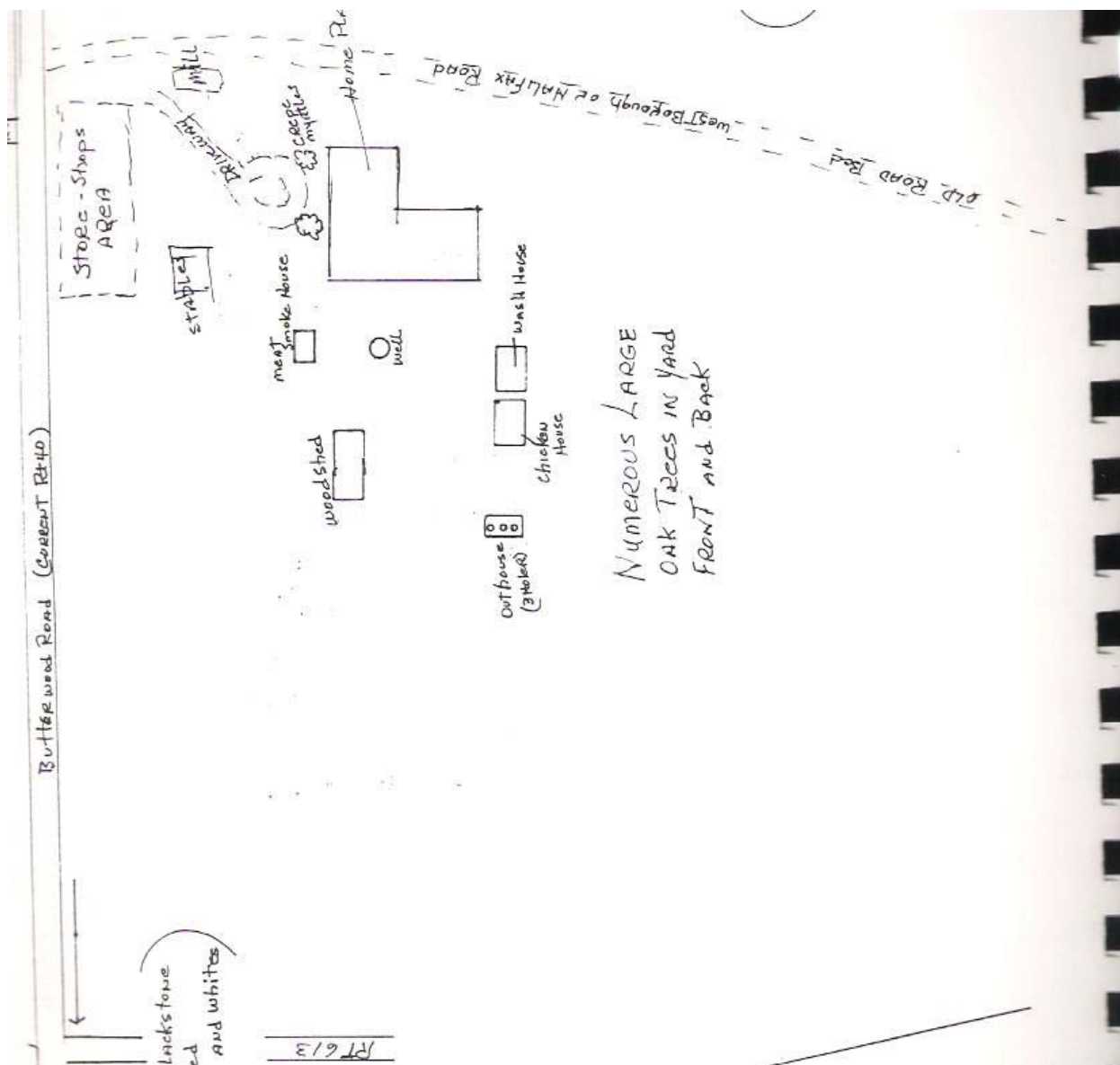


Figure 4: Different perspective of the same map with several features cut off in the previous image referenced in Figure 3.



Figure 5: This is a photograph of the current Vaughan home and property. Although it has been updated and the side porch adjusted, the layout and size maintain the integrity of the original.

There are several buildings that are referenced throughout the course of this study that require more explanation. Each plays a significant role in Darvills activity, so the following is a list of their names with details of its history and use.

DARVILLS STORE: You can tell by the diagrams in Figures 3 and 4 above where the store lies in relation to the Vaughan's home. The store was the heart of the community because all business, mail, provisions, and so forth were accessed and conducted here. It was just a minute or two walk from home to the store. When the store burned down in 1908, the new one was built

right across the street (Route 40) and run by someone outside the Vaughan family. Although each small locale in the county had its own store, Darvills Store's location made it unique. Servicemen at Camp (now Fort) Pickett used Route 40 as one of their main thoroughfares to interstate 85. Therefore, soldiers and other military personnel stopped in, which meant interactions between locals and outsiders. Also, the store is between two of the larger towns at the time – McKenney and Blackstone. Those on their way to one from the other stopped in for gas, drinks, etc.

DARVILLS COMMUNITY BUILDING (Also known as the Old Darvills School): This was located in an area south of Darvills, on the back road now known as Gills Bridge Road. It was the center of the community gatherings and activities, even in my lifetime. The well-known Darvills Fair operated there for numerous years. Once a school for the locals, it was closed in 1942 and reopened as the community building. Camp Pickett had commandeered a portion of the property to use as the base and razed several of the buildings. The only remaining structure burned down in 1998. It now has an historical marker assigned by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to note its significance and location.



Figure 6: Photograph of Darvills Community Center property taken by Bernard Fisher May 18, 2010 for the Historical Markers website.

BUTTERWOOD CHAPEL/CHURCH: It is one of the three churches that locals in Darvills attended. The location is on Route 40 on the border of property owned by Fort Pickett and Dinwiddie County. Originally an Anglican church, the property went into disarray until after the Civil War. At that time it was rebuilt and became part of the Methodist denomination. When Camp (Fort) Pickett was constructed, all of the remains from graves of white people displaced from properties and churches within the 46,000 acres acquired to build the base were reinterred here, many of them unknown. The church is currently recognized by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, National Register of Historic Places, and the National Park Service and remains Methodist. Today membership has dwindled to the point that the congregation meets only once a month.



Figure 7: Photograph of Butterwood United Methodist Church taken by Bernard Fisher May 23, 2010 for the Historical Markers website.

MANSON'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH: This church is located on a back road between Darvills and McKenney. Only a few families now attend as compared to its once bustling activity described by former residents.



Figure 8: Photograph of current structure of the Mansons United Methodist Church. The cemetery is directly across the street.

SHARON BAPTIST CHURCH: The Baptist Mission Board in Richmond organized this congregation on June 7, 1891, with only thirteen members. The first church was erected in October that same year and named after the home-site of one of its charter members, “Sharon Springs.” That structure was moved to a neighboring property and the land the current building rests on was conveyed to the church in 1896. The site later used as a cemetery was deeded to the church in 1938. On July 30, 1950, members of the church dedicated a new brick building built to replace the original. In 1971, a fellowship hall was build as an addition. This is the church that most of the Vaughan family members attended throughout several generations. It is located approximately a quarter of a mile from the Vaughan property toward McKenney on Route 40.



Figure 9: Photograph of current structures of Sharon Baptist Church taken by its current pastor, Dr. Ted Owens.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Vaughan Family Breakdown

*Please note that this listing is incomplete. Only those who have been mentioned by name in association with this project are provided so as not to further confuse the reader.

Indie Lee Ogburn
Married
James Thomas Vaughan

Children:

1. John Wesley Vaughan married Rosa Doggett
Children:
 - A. Evelyn "Louise" Vaughan
 - B. Kathleen "Frances" Vaughan
2. Josie Lee Vaughan married Grover Hite
Children:
 - A. Eunice May Hite Smith
3. Raymond Henry Vaughan married Alma Irene Cliborne
Children:
 - A. Raymond Henry Vaughan Jr. – married Muriel Caldwell
 - a. John Anthony Vaughan
 - b. Thomas Michael Vaughan
 - B. Edgar Thomas Vaughan – married Anne Samford Rousseau
 - a. Claude Edgar Vaughan
 - b. Charles Thomas Vaughan
 - c. Raymond Edward Vaughan
 - C. Helen Joan Vaughan – married William "James" Williamson
 - a. Jeffrey Lynn Williamson
 - b. Kenneth Allan Williamson
 - D. James Ronald Vaughan – married Carolyn Sue Norris
 - E. Ammon Cliborne Vaughan – married Christine Faye Palmore
4. Roy Lee Vaughan married Christine Robinson
5. James Hugh Vaughan married Nellie Ann Sheffield
Children:
 - A. Cecil Sheffield Vaughan
 - B. Richmond Lindley Vaughan
 - C. Donald Minor Vaughan married Carlene Virginia Duncan
6. Alma Lucille Vaughan married Charles Albert Parham
Children:

- A. Oscar Woodrow Parham
- B. Preston Ashford Parham

7. Erma Mae Vaughan married Lafayette Cliborne

Their Children:

- A. Graham Morton Cliborne
- B. Leonard Cliborne
- C. Indie Jeraline Cliborne married John McCarty
 - a. Evelyn "Diane"
- D. Wallace Cliborne

Family of Alma Irene Cliborne

IMMEDIATE FAMILY

George Lafayette Cliborne ("Fate") – Brother

Jerry Cliborne – Sister married E. Leslie Rogers

Children:

- A. Leslie C. "L.C." Rogers married Jerilene Keene
 - a. Ginger Rogers
- B. Beulah A. Rogers married Robert Blair
 - a. Bettie Kaye Blair

Jesse C. Cliborne – Brother married Mary Imogen Royster

Children:

- A. Randolph Cliborne married Louise Walker
- B. Wade Cliborne
- C. Clarence "Douglas" Cliborne married Gloria Abernathy

Cabell Howard Cliborne – Brother married Helen Britt, Edith Daniel

Annie Manervia Cliborne – Sister married Samuel Lee Davis

Elsie Ione Cliborne – Sister married Willie Harold Hite

CLOSE COUSINS

Garland Spencer Cliborne, Sr. married Eva Estelle Eastwood

Children:

- A. Marilyn Spencer Cliborne married Milton Dandridge Martin
- B. Roselyn "Rose" Irene Cliborne married William "Bill" Landon Coleman
 - a. Pamela Gayle Coleman
- C. Crowder Doc Mayes Cliborne
- D. Garland Spencer Cliborne, Jr. "G.S." married Delores Rogers

Josephine "Josie Mae" Young Cliborne married Robert Bell Wallace

Children:

- A. Robert Wallace married Estelle Williams
- B. Clifton Wallace
- C. Spencer Wallace married Carolyn Neely
- D. Brenda Wallace

Cousin:

A. Phyllis Wallace
 Stephen Lee Cliborne
 William Bud Cliborne married Lucy Bishop
 Children:
 A. Kathleen Cliborne married Hinton King
 a. Douglas King
 b. Betty King
 c. Lois King
 Fred Tucker
 Jennie "Jennie Pie" Cliborne married Odie Wilkins
 Children:
 A. Louise Wilkins married Meade Ozmore
 a. Lydia Ozmore
 B. Odie Wilkins, Jr. married Barbara
 a. Wayne Wilkins
 Herman Young Loftis married Mamie Taylor
 Children:
 A. Norman Franklin Loftis
 a. Mary Catherine Loftis married Russell Gammon
 i. Betty Jean Gammon
 James Ronald "Ronnie" Gooch
 Virginia Eastwood Meredith

Neighbors and Community Members

Marianne Winn	Ada Estelle Hutson Eastwood
Sandra Winn Furna	Luther Eastwood
S. E. Winn	Dr. Andrew Jackson "Jack" Eastwood
James Moore	Erma "Jean" Eastwood
Mary Powers	Jimmy Eastwood
Jackie Powers	Jerilene Cliborne Eastwood
Jane Powers	Tim Eastwood
Sonny Powers	Linda Sue Tucker
Jane Powers (different)	Arthur Procise
Dick Powers	Everett Procise
Carol Powers	Bill Procise
Cecelia Powers Edmonds	Cliffton Chandler
Thomas Edmonds	Sarah Chandler
Corling Riddle	Odelle Wilkins
Allen Riddle	Carrol Wilkins
James "Bobby" Riddle	Rachael Martin
Nadine Riddle	Clyde Martin
Judy Taylor	Phyllis Martin Gauldin
Douglas Finch	Lee Gauldin
Susan Stone	Clarence McKissick
Thomas Stone	Lewis Hardy

Wallace Stone
Thurman Gibbs
Daniel
Harry Echols
Mrs. Coburn
Howard Tompkins
Mrs. Condroy
Coles Bishop, Jr.
Becky Hardy
Mary Sue Davis Gammon
John A. Lee
Lennie Coleman
Jack Loftis

James "Raleigh" Byrd
Thomas Cousins
Willie Elder
Parker Cousins
Mrs. Russell (Dorene)
Gene Russell
Shelby Jean Martin
Lawson Carter
Donald Gammon
Jimmy Doyle
Betty Doyle
Connie Coleman
Mrs. Hoover

Work or School Related

Lee
Butch Cumby
Jack Wainwright
Ed Morgan
Walker
Mr. Pershing
Mr. Carr
Sergeant Major – Eugene A. Shea
Jack
Warren Rawles
Anne Rawles
Scott Rawles
Rodney "Chip" Rawles
Lois Avery
Donnie Daniels
Granvel Maitland
Randy Kyle

Bruce Simpson
Bernard Wainwright
Virginia Daniel
Lawrence Ward
Mr. Vaughan/Tom Vaughan
Mr. Bailey
General Irving
SMAJ Bonwell
First Sergeant
Rev. John P. "Jack" Moody
Alice Hudson
Clyde Townsend
Alvin Mayes
Linda Bishop
Nancy Tunstall
Bernard Jones
Charley S.

Periphery and Unknowns

Dr. Harris
Dr. Couch
Hayes Poytress
John G.
Graham

Dr. Kirkland
Doug Coburn
Mr. and Mrs. Warden
Susie
Fred J.

Vaughan Immediate Family

AMMON CLIBORNE VAUGHAN

Born on April 1, 1944, at home, Ammon was the last of five children and four sons born to Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan and Raymond Henry Vaughan in Darvills, Virginia. He attended McKenney High School in McKenney throughout his entire education (elementary and secondary). His report cards show him to be a shy, polite student of promising skill and knowledge without motivation. He was an all-star basketball player, supposedly recruited to play at Georgia Tech. His father's illness caused him to stay home and take various jobs right after high school. Eventually he was hired by the local telephone company. A short time later, he was inducted to serve in the Army and did so from 1965-1967 in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Upon his return home, he went back to work at the telephone company. His father passed away June 20, 1968. He married Christine Faye Palmore of Blackstone, Virginia, in 1969. He had two daughters, Lisa Renee Vaughan (born November 18, 1971) and Sheryl Anne Vaughan (born April 6, 1975). In 1975, their family home was constructed next to his mother's in Darvills, Virginia. He remained in the same home and in the same line of work until his death from cancer in 1997. He was well known in the community, often called "The Mayor." He was a former president of the Ruritan club, Head Deacon of Sharon Baptist Church, caretaker of the cemetery, P.T.O. President at Sunnyside Elementary and Dinwiddie Junior High School, and a member of a host of other organizations in his lifetime.

ALMA IRENE CLIBORNE VAUGHAN

Born in August 1906 to a wealthy family by local standards, Irene had two sisters and three brothers that lived to adulthood. She married Raymond Henry Vaughan against the wishes of her father and moved into a home shared with her husband's mother. Raymond Vaughan lacked the business sense of his father, who had been the owner and operator of most of the town's

industries. When Camp Pickett was organized by the government, he took a job there as a mechanic. He later worked on the Petersburg toll road until illness forced him into retirement in 1967. Raymond Vaughan died in 1968. Mrs. Vaughan took odd jobs, such as in the Levi Strauss factory from 1961-1966. Although it is not clear what job she performed there, it is known that after her husband's death she stopped working at the factory. She gardened, took care of finances, and held positions in her local church. She raised five children and had eleven grandchildren at the time of her death in 1989. During the nine years before her death, she suffered from Alzheimer's disease. She lived with her son, Ammon, until the severity of symptoms caused her to be placed in a specialized care facility. My own memories of her are sketchy, but I recall she was still cooking on a wood stove and using a chamber pot upstairs in her own home around 1980 when the symptoms of her illness began. She was known as a prankster in her youth, but exhibited a reserved but generous personality as an adult.

RAYMOND HENRY VAUGHAN, SR.

Raymond was born in May 1901 to James Thomas and Indie Lee Ogburn Vaughan in Darvills, Virginia. Roy was his twin brother and together they were one of two sets of twins born to Indie Lee. There were a total of ten children in this family. According to family documents, James Thomas Vaughan was well known in the area. He had acquired wealth through a number of businesses conducted on or near his property in Darvills. James farmed, but also ran a general store, a grain and lumber mill, a blacksmith operation, a funeral home, and post office. Raymond seemed to have no interest in these operations. He married Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan and promptly settled in with his widowed mother, Indie Lee, on the homeplace. He worked as a mechanic and farmer, but also held a position with the state toll road near Chester. He died in 1968 from cancer at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. Individuals

interviewed for this project have stated that he had an intimidating personality, developing few lasting friendships. His views were peculiar for the time period according to his contemporaries and his dry humor was often misinterpreted. Although he was a talented machinist, it seems that a lack of ambition made others think he was somewhat lazy. His treatment of his children was notoriously tough and disciplined. There was no nonsense in his household. Ammon, the last child, had a better, yet still distant relationship with his father perhaps due to his arrival later in his parents' life.

RAYMOND HENRY VAUGHAN, JR.

Raymond Jr. (also known simply as Junior) was the first child of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. and Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan. Born in July 1928 as the oldest of five children, he often felt the brunt of the discipline his father doled out. He entered the military service and later earned his pilot's license. Many different jobs and moves are noted throughout his life. During the time of this edited correspondence between his youngest brother and mother, he and his family lived in Tennessee, where his wife, Muriel Eloise Caldwell, was raised. He had two sons who at this time were in elementary school. Later, possibly during the time of his father's illness and death, something happened that strained his relationship with several members of the family. Rarely as a child do I remember his presence, unless it was a unique function such as a milestone birthday, wedding, or reunion. Before his death little more than a year ago, he had made a concerted effort to rekindle relationships with family. He moved back to McKenney, Virginia, and became active in Sharon Baptist Church, the church his family in Darvills attended. He drew several diagrams of the property in Darvills which were used for the purpose of this project.

EDGAR THOMAS VAUGHAN

He was the second child, and son, born to Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. and Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan in August 1930. At the time of the correspondence presented here, he and his family were living on property deeded over to him just west of the family home at the corner of Darvills Road and Gills Bridge Road. He and his wife, Anne, were active in the community. He had three sons: Charles, Raymond, and Claude. Both Claude and Raymond had physical and mental disabilities. This difficult situation was made even more challenging given the funding needed to care for them. Edgar worked for the Coca-Cola Company at its plant nearby which required a lot of time away from home. Additionally, he had been in the Army and remained as a member of the National Guard. This took him away for periods of time as well. Despite the strain of work and supporting a family, he maintained a position within the church and was active in the community. He often helped out family, neighbors, and friends that needed assistance with family, construction, etc. Particularly helpful in my research was the fact that he was a member, deacon, and treasurer in Sharon Baptist Church for a number of years. This allowed me to conclusively know who was a member and who attended church elsewhere. Anne Vaughan was a stay-at-home mother who actively engaged herself in her sons' school activities, church activities, and community. Despite moving away, I recall as a small child that they still visited Alma Irene nearly every weekend. He gave advice and offered help, when he could, to our family. Currently, he resides in Mechanicsville and maintains relationships with all of us.

HELEN JOAN VAUGHAN WILLIAMSON

She was the third child and only girl born to Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. and Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan in December 1933. Many family photos show that she and I share a remarkable resemblance. Growing up, she took care of her brothers, Ronald and Ammon. She was more or less a bridge between the older two boys and the younger two boys. During school,

she was an excellent student and athlete. After high school, she married William “James” Williamson and held numerous secretarial positions. During the time period of this correspondence, she was adjusting to family responsibility and being away from home. She and her family were living near Winchester where duties of raising two young boys with school, sports, etc., strained her physically and emotionally. At one point, she stopped working and suffered from illness. Later on, she began working secretarial jobs again. Both as a child and an adult, she remained close to her mother. Aside from Ammon, she was the only other child that regularly visited and cared for Alma Irene during the many years she spent in a nursing home. She maintained relationships with all of the siblings and often asked me to visit during the summer. We were close for many years. She now lives in Glen Allen, Virginia. The last few years have been strenuous due to the recent death of her husband after a long, debilitating illness and the accidental overdose of prescription medication by her son at their home.

JAMES “RONALD” VAUGHAN

Ronald was the third son and fourth child of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. and Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan. Born at home in January 1940, he was known as a wild child, a rebel compared to his other brothers and sister. His attitude was nonchalant, and his quiet demeanor masked his penchant for risk taking. School had a moderate interest for him, but his true passion was racing cars. It was antics such as these that caused strain between him and his parents. At the time of the correspondence discussed here, he was being discharged from the Army where he had been stationed in Kansas. This was a period of change and adjustment for Ronald as he dealt with the loss of a fiancée and struggled to determine his place in life. At this time, he got a job at the telephone company in Blackstone where Ammon had been working prior to his enlistment. Out of all the siblings, his relationship with Ammon showed some strain. It could be the result

of sibling rivalry accompanied by his rocky relationship with his parents. He lived with his parents until his marriage to Carolyn Sue Norris of Tennessee. They dwelt in Blackstone toward the end of Ammon's service and then sometime after his father's death they moved to Charlottesville, Virginia. They had two daughters and visited periodically for family functions. He retired from the phone company several years ago and now pursues his interests.

Vaughan Extended Family

MURIEL ELOISE CALDWELL VAUGHAN (Wife of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Jr.)

She grew up in Tennessee and was supposedly a beauty pageant winner. Most people still remember her hair because she was so particular about its care. Her interactions with the rest of the family were infrequent and Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. did not get along with her. She spent time working at several places throughout her life, but mainly stayed at home caring for her two sons, Thomas and John. Toward the end of her life, she had a stroke and her husband, Raymond Henry Vaughan, Jr. refused any assistance. He cared for her himself for many years, showing much love and dedication. She is reported to have had a quick temper and demanding personality at times.

THOMAS MICHAEL VAUGHAN (Son of Raymond Jr. and Muriel Vaughan)

Tom was born in July 1955 as the oldest son. He was in elementary school at the time of this correspondence and mentioned indirectly.

JOHN "JOHNNY" ANTHONY VAUGHAN (Son of Raymond Jr. and Muriel Vaughan)

At the time period examined here, John was in elementary school. He was born in February 1958 and was reported to have been so intelligent that they wanted him to skip a grade. Later in life, he would enter military service. He is still serving.

ANNE ROUSSEAU SAMFORD VAUGHAN (Wife of Edgar Thomas Vaughan)

Born in July 1935, she had a close relationship with both Ammon Cliborne Vaughan and Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan. Part of the correspondence examined during this time is letters from her to Ammon. She resided nearby in land deeded over, well within walking distance of the family home. During her adult life at this time, she was a stay-at-home mom raising her sons and actively involving herself in school, church, and community events. Later, she would work for Avon for many years. Before retirement, she worked briefly in an office. Anne was the closest of all of the wives to me and she was always kind and available growing up. She shared whatever she had and made a conscious effort to get along with everyone. She shared with Edgar the responsibility for two children with disabilities. Many references are made to doctors, visits with Claude, and improving health. Meanwhile, she maintained duties at church by running the Vacation Bible School and coordinating interactions with neighbors and friends. Currently, she enjoys retirement.

CHARLES THOMAS VAUGHAN (Son of Edgar and Anne Vaughan)

He was born in December 1957 in Darvills, Virginia as the middle son. Charles is also the only son without any significant health related issues. At the time examined here, he was in elementary school and is mentioned frequently by both Anne and Alma Irene. Later, he completed school and graduated with honors from Georgia Tech in Engineering. He currently works in Canada with his wife and four children (two grown) and is active in his church and community.

CLAUDE EDGAR VAUGHAN (Son of Edgar and Anne Vaughan)

Born as the first child and son in November 1956, he arrived with numerous problems. The physical and mental defects were soon enough to require institutionalization. There are many

references to visits to him throughout the letters, but there is no mention of the severity of his problems. For many years in my childhood, I recall visits at Alma Irene's house when they would bring him home for the day. My memories recall him dressed in a multitude of things to protect him, such as a helmet, padding, and etc. At some point he was moved to Central State Hospital where he has remained for the last few decades.

RAYMOND EDWARD VAUGHAN (Son of Edgar and Anne Vaughan)

He was born as the youngest child and third son in July 1961. It is suggested through interviews conducted that his epilepsy and other difficulties stem from misuse of forceps during childbirth. This, however, cannot be confirmed and is only speculation. Nevertheless, "Ray" has had numerous difficulties through the years and has used crutches since I can remember. Ray has also been through numerous surgeries. During the time discussed here, he is mentioned in the context of health issues and his mischievous nature. There is mention of visits to the doctor, but again, no sense of the severity of the problems. He has a pleasant personality and many interests, but no permanent work situation. Recently, he has managed to get into a care facility away from home, but he will never be completely independent. In fact, his physical challenges have become greater the older he gets.

WILLIAM "JAMES" WILLIAMSON (Husband of Helen Vaughan Williamson)

James was born in June 1926 to a family in Crewe, Virginia. He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and then served in the Navy. He married Helen soon after. For many years, he was a salesman for General Electric. The family moved several times, but finally settled in Glen Allen, Virginia. They visited Alma Irene and the rest of the family every few weeks and during holidays. In the context of this project, he is mentioned often for coaching

Little League, hunting, and fishing. He held numerous part-time jobs during retirement, including working at Overhill Lake. During my childhood, he went out of his way to spend time with me playing putt-putt, going to the lake, and fishing. We also shared a love of Carolina (tarheel) basketball. He passed away nearly a year ago after a prolonged illness.

JEFFREY LYNN WILLIAMSON (Son of James and Helen Williamson)

He was the oldest son, born in December 1954. During the time of these letters, he is in elementary school. There are references to his play in Little League baseball. Later, he worked odd jobs and married twice. His first marriage resulted in a son with numerous physical and mental disabilities. The son is currently institutionalized. His second marriage resulted in a daughter, Dakotah, who recently graduated from high school. Over the years, he has had significant personal challenges. He seldom visits or interacts with family members.

KENNETH ALLEN WILLIAMSON (Son of James and Helen Williamson)

Kenny was the youngest son and second child, born in October 1959. Although my memories of him are as a fun-loving, happy young man, apparently that was a limited view. My close relationship with him has been cited by other family members as unusual. He rarely interacted with anyone. He had numerous difficulties growing up and was often overshadowed by his brother. A motorcycle accident as a young man left him with an amputated leg and other injuries. Kenny did not seem to get over this, and continued fighting his demons. In the context of these letters, there are few mentions of him.

CAROLYN SUE NORRIS VAUGHAN (Wife of James Ronald Vaughan)

She was born October 1948 in Tennessee. During the time of correspondence here, she was introduced to Ronald through Raymond, Jr. and Muriel. They were married and resided in Blackstone for awhile. She was remembered as a sweet girl and Ronald's family thought well of

her. There was no steady employment for her in town, and eventually they moved to Fluvanna County near Charlottesville. She gave birth to two daughters, Michele Lee and Nicole Susanne. Both were around my age and we played together often in the early years. As we got older, their visits became infrequent. Today, she works as a teacher's aid in a specialized school.

GARLAND SPENCER CLIBORNE, SR. (Alma Irene's first cousin)

Seen as the patriarch of the Cliborne family and Darvills community, he had great impact on community and church decisions. Born in December 1909, he was close in age to Alma Irene. He was a tobacco farmer and head deacon at Sharon Baptist Church. There are references to him in these letters regarding actions taken on both fronts. He died when I was a child and I have few memories of him.

MARYLIN SPENCER CLIBORNE MARTIN

She was a daughter of Garland Spencer Cliborne, Sr. During the time period of these letters, she was getting married. My memories of her are few because she died from cancer when I was a child.

CROWDER DOC MAYES CLIBORNE (Alma Irene's first cousin)

He was the younger brother of Garland Spencer Cliborne, Sr. In 1966 he had a lengthy illness that led to an untimely death.

JOSEPHINE "JOSIE MAE" YOUNG CLIBORNE WALLACE (Alma Irene's first cousin)

Josie was one of Alma Irene's closest friends growing up. She was born in August 1906 within days of Alma Irene. They got into much foolishness together, from what I can gather. They maintained a close relationship as they got older, with Josie Mae living down the street with her husband, Bob Bell Wallace, and their children. They farmed most of their lives. She was a

member of Sharon Baptist Church also. She died when I was in high school. Despite living close by, I have few memories of her.

ROBERT WALLACE (Son of Josie Mae Cliborne Wallace)

He was born in March 1929 as the oldest child and son. He was close in age to Raymond Jr. and Edgar Vaughan. They spent their childhood together, and there are many stories of the jokes and mischief he was involved in. He owned and operated the only grocery store in McKenney for many years. Each year he holds a reunion for family members at his home in the same area.

ESTELLE WILLIAMS WALLACE (Wife of Robert Wallace)

CLIFTON WALLACE (Son of Josie Mae Cliborne Wallace)

Born in 1930, he was the second child and son. He was also close in age to his brother Robert and to Raymond Jr. and Edgar Vaughan. He was a part of their childhood escapades. Unlike his brothers and sisters, he did not live in the area once he reached adulthood.

PHYLLIS WALLACE

Cousin of the Wallace family, she was well known as a country music singer. Since she came from the area, many people followed her career.

BRENDA WALLACE (Daughter of Jose Mae Wallace)

She worked at Reynold's Metals during this time. She was the youngest and only daughter of the Wallace clan. She currently lives in Virginia Beach.

SPENCER WALLACE (Son of Josie Mae Wallace)

Growing up nearby, Spencer had a well known fear of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. Most of the time, he would not even visit if Raymond was at home. He took over his family's farming operation and still lives on the property. He was born in October 1939, closest in age to Ronald Vaughan. The letters investigated here mention his marriage to Caroline Wallace as well as a few

other things. He is a deacon of Sharon Baptist Church and beloved in the community for his antics and humor, as well as a kind heart.

CAROLYN NEELY WALLACE (Wife of Spencer Wallace)

Mentioned in the letters through her marriage to Spencer, she is unusual in the context of this study. Her family is from New York, and they are Catholic. They moved to Blackstone when Caroline was a teenager. She is a member of Sharon Baptist Church. Her mother resides in a house on their property.

ROY LEE VAUGHAN (Twin brother of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.)

Twin brother of Raymond, he moved to Amelia County as a young man. Although he maintained a relationship with Raymond, it was a peculiar one. Visits are mentioned in the letters, but the context is not. Interviews indicate that Roy would pull into the driveway of Raymond's house. If Raymond wanted to see him, he would walk up to the road. If not, Roy would simply drive off. Apparently, Roy did not enter the home. Why this is the case remains a mystery.

ELSIE "CHRISTINE" ROBERTSON VAUGHAN (Wife of Roy Lee Vaughan)

She was originally from Blackstone, Virginia. Otherwise, no other information was remembered by surviving family members.

JOSIE LEE VAUGHAN HITE (Sister of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.)

She died in 1927 and there does not seem to have been a close relationship with her family. One will written by my great-grandmother Indie actually disowns her. The reasons for this act remain unclear.

EUNICE MAY HITE SMITH (Daughter of Josie Lee Vaughan Hite)

She grew up living close to her grandfather Cliborne's store, between South Hill and Kenbridge. They did not interact much with the family, so little is known about her. She was living in Florida the last time anyone had contact with her.

STEPHEN LEE CLIBORNE (Cousin of Alma Irene)

He was another brother of Garland Cliborne. Although a member of Mansons Methodist Church, he often involved himself in matters of Darvills and its population. He was a farmer.

CECIL SHEFFIELD VAUGHAN (Nephew of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.)

He grew up around the same time as Raymond Jr. and Edgar Vaughan. For many years, he was active in Blackstone's civic and business organizations. He and his brothers owned the Pontiac car dealership there for over forty-two years.

DONALD MINOR VAUGHAN

Brother of Cecil Vaughan and also born close to Cecil, Edgar, and Raymond, Jr. He resided in Blackstone his entire life and led a life similar to Cecil's.

CARLENE VIRGINIA DUNCAN VAUGHAN (Wife of Donald Vaughan)

She spent most of her life as a homemaker and did not travel away from her home in Blackstone often.

CABELL HOWARD CLIBORNE (Brother of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

He was born in November 1912, several years after Alma Irene. Mentioned in the context of the letters for his visits, there are few instances I personally recall of seeing him at family functions. He and his family lived in Virginia Beach.

EDITH DANIEL CLIBORNE (Wife of Cabell Cliborne)

She lived in Blackstone as a housewife, but labored for many various civic and church organizations. Those interviewed described her as "always doing for others."

WILLIAM "BUD" CLIBORNE

First cousin of Alma Irene, he was born in June 1898. He is mentioned in the letters for visits to the Vaughan home. Only a few of his children lived to adulthood. The daughter married into the King family, which is mentioned in association with church activities.

JERRY CLIBORNE ROGERS (Sister of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

She was mother to L.C. mentioned below and was rumored to have tuberculosis. It was said by Edgar Vaughan that she “always slept on the front porch,” not going inside unless it was seriously cold.

BEULAH A. ROGERS BLAIR (Daughter of Jerry Cliborne Rogers)

Not much information was gleaned about her aside from the fact that she kept to herself a lot and did not involve herself in anything.

BETTIE KAYE BLAIR (Daughter of Beulah A. Rogers Blair)

She was born in 1948, a few years younger than Ammon.

LESLIE “L.C.” CLIBORNE ROGERS (Son of Jerry Cliborne Rogers)

Nephew of Alma Irene, he was born in February 1922. He grew up near the original Cliborne farm and spent time working the farm, as well as for Fort Pickett. He also had a wonderful singing voice. His name comes up in conjunction with visits and church activities.

JERILENE KEENE ROGERS (Wife of L.C. Cliborne Rogers)

She was born August 1923 and is still living with her daughter, Ginger, in the family home.

Unless she helped out with the farming, there is no knowledge of her working outside the home at any point in her life. She keeps to herself and goes out only to visit on rare occasions.

GINGER ROGERS (Daughter of L.C. and Jerilene Rogers)

Born in June 1950, she has remained single her entire life. She is the only child of this union. Even today, she is active in the church and used to travel with her father to other churches singing and playing the piano. Aside from odd jobs, she has never held a permanent position.

FRED TUCKER

He was a local in the community with loose family ties. He worked at the Baskerville mill plant, but also farmed on the side.

IMOGEN ROYSTER CLIBORNE (Sister-in-law of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

She was one of Alma Irene's closest friends since childhood. Later, she married Alma's brother, Jessie, and lived on the site of Alma's childhood. Together, they performed many practical jokes in the community. Their most famous, told to me by Imogen, happened when they were both teenagers. Apparently, they dressed as "hobos" (street people) and sat on a log at the intersection of one of the main thoroughfares. Getting no attention, they began acting drunk by gesticulating, hollering out, and dancing around. It upset some of the locals so badly that several of the men came to investigate. The men were angry about finding out that it was just two girls playing around, to the point that both Imogen and Alma Irene received a severe punishment. In telling it, however, Imogen said it had been well worth it. They remained friends throughout their lives, visiting each other frequently. She and Jessie had three sons; Clarence Douglas, Randolph, and Wade. Douglas was the closest in age to Ammon, and they were best friends.

JESSIE C. CLIBORNE (Brother of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

He is closest in age to Alma Irene, born two years earlier in May 1904. Jessie spent most of his life as a tobacco farmer. He was a benevolent and loving man, though he stayed ill as he got older. He was closer to Alma Irene than other siblings simply because they lived so close together. He and his wife were also active in Sharon Baptist Church. Out of his three sons, only

one, Douglas, chose to live on the property. My memories of Jessie are few, but I remember him smiling often.

RANDOLPH CLIBORNE (Oldest son of Jessie and Imogen Cliborne)

LOUISE CLIBORNE (Wife of Randolph Cliborne)

WADE L. CLIBORNE (Middle son of Jessie and Imogen Cliborne)

GLORIA ABIGAIL ABERNATHY CLIBORNE (Wife of Clarence Douglas Cliborne)

Gloria went to Sunnyside School with Douglas, Ammon, Marianne and several others mentioned here. Her family lived in nearby McKenney. As a teenager, Gloria (Abby) was active in school organizations and cheerleading. She developed a relationship with Douglas early and married him soon after high school. For over thirty years, she worked in Human Resources at Central State Hospital. She was already married to Douglas when this correspondence occurred and therefore knew nearly everyone mentioned. Gloria provides a unique opportunity to see those in Darvills from the perspective of both an outsider and family member. She is well known for her acts of kindness and generosity, along with a spirited personality. Her daughter, Wendy, and I were born days apart and remained close friends throughout our childhood. Both she and Douglas were like second parents to me and provided opportunities to travel that I would not have had otherwise.

CLARENCE DOUGLAS CLIBORNE (Nephew of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

“Doc” was the son of Imogen and Jessie Cliborne. He grew up with intimate knowledge of Darvills and of the Vaughan family. Ammon remained his best friend from childhood on through adulthood. They had many escapades together. After high school, Douglas got a job with the Virginia Department of Transportation. He worked there until his retirement a few years ago. During the time period of these letters, he was drafted into the Army, a source of

concern for the family often mentioned in correspondence. He was not as fortunate as Ammon and was transferred to Vietnam as a Military Police Officer. While serving there, he was wounded badly enough to warrant his discharge. Douglas was also active at Sharon Baptist Church where he serves today as a deacon and treasurer.

ROSELYN “ROSE” IRENE CLIBORNE COLEMAN (Cousin)

She was one of Garland Cliborne’s children and grew up close to the Vaughan family. Today she lives close by and worked with Gloria Cliborne for a number of years.

WILLIAM “BILL” LANDON COLEMAN (Husband of Rose Coleman)

PAMELA GAYLE COLEMAN (Daughter of Rose Coleman)

GARLAND SPENCER “G.S.” CLIBORNE, JR. (Cousin)

Son and namesake of Garland Cliborne, Sr., he continues to farm tobacco and other crops just as his father did. He went to school at the same time as Ammon and had a close relationship with the Vaughan and Cliborne families.

DELORES ROGERS CLIBORNE (Wife of G. S. Cliborne)

ERMA MAE VAUGHAN (Sister of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.)

She was born in April 1896 to James Thomas and Indie Lee Ogburn Vaughan in Darvills. Mentioned in the letters primarily as visits, she had a semi-friendly relationship with Raymond Sr. and Alma Irene. She was also a twin, though her sibling died as an infant. It is stated by family members that she was notoriously difficult. She had definite ideas about proper conduct and social constructs.

ALMA LUCILLE VAUGHAN (Sister of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.)

She was born in July 1893 to James Thomas and Indie Lee Ogburn Vaughan in Darvills. As noted in the letters, she is referred to in conjunction with visits she and Erma made together to

the home of Raymond Sr. and Alma Irene. Hers was a relationship primarily through photos and mailings, as current holdings of the author suggest. She was married twice. Her first marriage was to Charles Albert Parham until his death in 1946. The union produced five children. The second marriage was to William Linwood Maile. This union produced no children.

EVELYN "DIANNE" (Daughter of India Jeroline Cliborne)

INDIA JEROLINE CLIBORNE (Daughter of Erma Mae Vaughan)

She visited Jean Eastwood a lot during this time and continues to visit surviving family members and friends in the community. She has been difficult to trace due to multiple moves and marriages.

ELSIE IONE CLIBORNE HITE (Sister of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

She was born in March 1918 and is mentioned in the context of visits. Alma Irene cared for her as a young girl and developed a close relationship with her. After marrying, she and her family lived in Kenbridge for a time and then moved to Greensboro, North Carolina.

ANNIE MANERVIA CLIBORNE DAVIS (Sister of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

She is mentioned along with Elsie in the context of visits. She was born in October 1915 and was also cared for by Alma Irene. The three sisters were very close growing up. After marrying, she and her family lived in Chase City.

SAMUEL LEE DAVIS (Husband of Annie Manervia Cliborne Davis)

He farmed property in Baskerville near the town of South Hill in Southside Virginia.

Neighbors (Unrelated and Distant Relations)

MEADE OZMORE

Meade lived with his family directly to the left of the Vaughan property. He married Louise, who was a cousin of Alma Irene. They had three children; a son, Laverne, and two daughters, Patricia

and Lydia. Lydia is the daughter that Ronald Vaughan was engaged to directly before the correspondence studied here. Ozmore was primarily a farmer, though he took odd jobs on the side. The children went to school with Ammon and spent many hours playing together. They were also members of Sharon Baptist Church.

LOUISE WILKINS OZMORE (First Cousin of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan)

She was one of Irene's closest friends and companions throughout their lives. They shared food, outings, labor, etc. Their children grew up as friends. These letters do not indicate their relationship, possibly due to the unresolved emotions tied to the broken engagement between her daughter, Lydia, and Ronald.

MAMIE TAYLOR LOFTIS

She was the wife of Herman Loftis who lived at the store across the road from the Vaughan home. She was close to all of the Vaughans, but particularly to Anne Vaughan (Edgar's wife). Mamie was also a member of Sharon Baptist Church.

JACK LOFTIS

He was a local farmer who was blind. He could tell what he was doing by feeling his way through things. He was still hired by farmers to assist in their duties because his level of skill remained high despite his disability.

MRS. HOOVER

Along with Mamie Loftis mentioned earlier, she managed the Darvills store directly across the street from the Vaughan homeplace. She had two daughters, Anne and Patsy, who were close in age to Ammon. She was originally from Brunswick County and eventually went back there to live.

MARIANNE WINN

She lived with her family on the opposite side of Meade Ozmore and his family. It was within easy walking distance to the Vaughan household. She went to school with Ammon and they spent a lot of time playing together as children. Her family was esteemed in the community. After high school, she attended Richmond Professional Institute. After graduating there with a degree in the arts, she returned to Darvills for a couple of years. She had numerous difficulties throughout her life, derived from a lifestyle outside the norm of the rural community. As a result, she spent most of her adulthood in New York City. She committed suicide when I was in high school just one day after talking with my father on the telephone.

SANDRA WINN FURNA

She is the adopted daughter of Inez, a neighbor, who grew up in the community. In age, she was close to Ronald. Currently, she lives in Nottoway County and functions as their Chief Magistrate.

S. E. WINN

Neighbor and good friend of Raymond Vaughan. He often visited their residence and side jobs on his farm equipment. Running the lumber mill was his occupation, but he also farmed.

JAMES MOORE

He lived in between Marianne Winn's family and Sharon Baptist Church. Although he did not attend, he allowed use of his property for functions and is mentioned in community activities.

MARY POWERS (Jackie Powers' mother)

She and her family lived down the main road just a couple of tenths of a mile on the opposite side. Their family made their living primarily through farming. The mentions of her in the correspondence reflect illness and family difficulties. Those interviewed have suggested that she was a unique person.

JACKIE POWERS

Around the age of Edgar Vaughan, he was a notorious practical joker and all-around character.

He lived during this time period with his wife and mother in the same household. Ammon worked for him on his tobacco farm for awhile. They eventually moved and he changed his job from farming to working in Camp Pickett.

JANE POWERS (Wife of Jackie Powers)

She is mentioned in the letters in conjunction with her difficulties with her mother-in-law.

SONNY POWERS

Brother to Jackie Powers and son of Mary Powers, he lived with his family across the street from the main Powers's household. He is mentioned here as helping out with projects for the Vaughan family.

JANE POWERS (Wife of Sonny Powers)

She is mentioned in association with community events.

DICK POWERS (Youngest son of Sonny and Jane Powers)

CAROL POWERS (Sister of Sonny Powers)

She babysat for Anne Vaughan as a youth.

CECELIA POWERS EDMONDS (Sister of Sonny Powers, wife of Thomas Edmonds)

She was newly married and starting a family at the time of these letters. For many years she worked as a registered nurse at Central State Hospital in Petersburg.

THOMAS EDMONDS (Husband of Cecelia Powers)

He ran a large farm near McKenney right off Route 40.

ADA ESTELLE HUTSON EASTWOOD

She was a close friend and neighbor of Alma Irene. They lived down the highway that extended beyond the driveway of the Vaughan homesite.

LUTHER EASTWOOD

He lived directly across from both the Darvills store and the Vaughan homeplace on the corner.

He later moved to North Carolina and has had little interaction with the community since.

JACK EASTWOOD (DR. ANDREW JACKSON EASTWOOD)

He was the brother of Ada and Luther. He moved away after high school and lived in South Carolina. He died during the time of this correspondence.

ERMA "JEAN" EASTWOOD

She is the daughter of Ada Eastwood and went to school with Ammon. At this time she was newly married and working for Reynolds Metals in Petersburg. She carpooled with several other local women. There are several mentions of her in correspondence in reference to her job, vacation, and new car.

JIMMY EASTWOOD

He is the husband of Jean Eastwood and is mentioned routinely in conjunction with Jean's activities.

JERILENE CLIBORNE EASTWOOD

TIM EASTWOOD (Jimmy Eastwood's brother)

LINDA SUE TUCKER

She was the daughter of Inez and Owen Tucker, neighbors of the Vaughans in Darvills. She was in between the age of Ammon and Charles, Anne and Edgar's oldest son.

ARTHUR PROCISE (Father of Everett and Bill Procise)

Farmer who lived down the street as a neighbor of the Vaughan family.

EVERETT PROCISE (Son of Arthur Procise)

Close in age to Ammon, they were close friends and spent a lot of time together growing up. He is well known for his agricultural studies and patents. For many years, he was a professor at North Carolina State University. Currently, he is retired and lives on the family's property in the same location.

BILL PROCISE (Son of Arthur Procise, Everett's brother)

He continues to farm in Nottoway County. He was closer in age to Helen Vaughan.

CLIFFTON CHANDLER

During this period he is a local farmer and neighbor. At one point, there was bad blood between the families. This arose from speculation that he had set on fire the store that Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.'s father had owned and operated. Supposedly, Chandler ran his own store down the street and felt it was too much competition. Ultimately, whatever happened or did not happen determined little about the relationship at this time period.

SARAH CHANDLER (Wife of Cliffton Chandler)

She worked at Reynold's Metals of Petersburg during this time.

CORLING RIDDLE (Pronounced "Curling")

He was the son of Bo Riddle, brother of Allen Riddle. He worked in the lumber business and heavy equipment for many years. He had a working relationship with Raymond Vaughan.

ALLEN RIDDLE

He was the son of Bo Riddle, brother to Corling Riddle. He was married to Maureen. Charlotte was his daughter. His escapades are well remembered and he was something of a character. Aunt Anne described him as able to "curse better than anyone I've known then and since."

VIRGINIA EASTWOOD MEREDITH

Relative and neighbor of Irene Vaughan.

ODELLE WILKINS

Neighbor who lived down the street and attended Sharon Baptist Church.

CARROL WILKINS (Son of Odelle Wilkins)

Carroll grew up close in age to Helen Vaughan Williamson. He continues to farm on the same property his family has owned for years. After a break with the church for many years, he now functions as the Head of Deacons for Sharon Baptist Church.

ODIE WILKINS, SR.

Related to both Alma Irene and Louise Ozmore, he lived with his family directly across from Sharon Baptist Church. He was around the age of Raymond Jr. and Edgar. For years he served in the military, on active duty and then as a reserve. He also worked at Fort Lee until his retirement. He is mentioned in the letters associated with church and fishing. At the time, he had two sons that kept him involved with children's activities. Even with a full-time job, he carved out time to farm tobacco. After Ammon's death, he served as the Head Deacon for the church and an officer in the Ruritan Club.

BARBARA WILKINS (Wife of Odie Wilkins, Jr.)

WAYNE WILKINS (Son of Odie Wilkins, Jr.)

RACHAEL MARTIN (Wife of Clyde Martin)

She spent most of her life as a housewife. This included helping out on the farm. She was also active in Sharon Baptist Church. Her most memorable attribute was baking rolls. Even today, her recipe for it is featured in cookbooks and passed around.

CLYDE MARTIN

Local farmer who lived approximately two miles away from the Vaughan family during this time

period. He died shortly after Raymond Vaughan. They were close friends growing up.

PHYLLIS MARTIN GAULDIN

She was the wife of Lee Gauldin and a member of Sharon Baptist Church through her parents Rachael and Bob Martin. They had grown up down the road about three miles, closer to Douglas Cliborne. She went to school with Helen Vaughan Williamson. At the time of these letters, her husband is serving as an active member of the military and is facing reassignment. In addition, she is raising two small boys. During my childhood, her family resided in Petersburg. Within the last decade she has lost her husband and both of her children. She moved back into her parents' home near Darvills and continues to reside there.

LEE GAULDIN

He is the husband of Phyllis Gauldin and is mentioned here because of the changes in his military assignments.

JAMES "BOBBY" RIDDLE

Peer of Ammon, known mainly in these letters for having difficulties adjusting to military life. Having known him most of my life, it is easy to guess why this may have been. Bobby has always been shy and reclusive. He is always smiling, but often seems skittish and ill at ease. He worked with Ammon at the telephone company after the military.

NADINE RIDDLE (Bobby Riddle's Wife)

JUDY TAYLOR

Daughter of Claudene Taylor

SUSAN STONE (Wife of Thomas Stone)

Neighbor and peer of Ronald and Ammon.

THOMAS STONE

Peer of Ronald, Ammon, and Douglas who has farmed most of his life as well as holding down an outside job. He and his family lived between Darvills and Flat Rock on Route 40, about four miles away from the Vaughan residence.

WALLACE STONE

CLARANCE MCKISSICK

He was a neighbor of the Vaughan family down the road about a mile and died during the time period of these letters. His property has been passed down to another local family who maintains community ties and actively participates in Sharon Baptist Church.

DOUGLAS FINCH

Neighbor known for the size of his large family.

JAMES RONALD "RONNIE" GOOCH

He was a distant relative and a member of the community. He went to school with Ammon at Sunnyside School.

HINTON KING

He was related to Alma Irene by marriage through the Cliborne line. He was her age and seems to have been friends with Raymond, Sr.

LEWIS HARDY

He was a farmer in Victoria. He bought the old Chandler place directly across from Sharon Church.

JAMES "RALEIGH" BYRD

He attended McKenney school with Edgar Vaughan and married a British woman named Lena. He lived next door to Flat Rock Grocery (on Route 40 between Darvills and McKenney). His investment in bottled water distribution before it became popular enabled him to retire early.

Work Related

LEE

There is nothing known about him other than his relationship as Ammon's friend during the service. He is not listed in the Fort Jackson yearbook.

BRUCE SIMPSON

BUTCH CUMBY

He worked at the telephone company in Blackstone with Ammon and Ronald. There are a few surviving letters he sent to Ammon while he was in the service. After this time period, they continued to work together for several years.

BERNARD WAINWRIGHT

Neighbor and friend of Ammon. He was quiet and mild mannered. He continues to live in the area.

JACK WAINWRIGHT

Neighbor and friend of Ammon. He accompanied the Vaughans on many of their social outings. He continues to live in the area.

VIRGINIA DANIEL

A former supervisor of Alma Irene at the Levi Strauss Factory in Blackstone.

ED MORGAN

He worked with Edgar Vaughan at the Coca-Cola Plant and often traveled with Edgar when they had meetings and business trips.

LAWRENCE WARD

He was a friend and coworker of Ronald Vaughan. When there were storms or lengthy work sessions, Ronald would often stay with him at his residence in Blackstone.

LENNIE COLEMAN

His family lived off Flat Rock Road and attended Sharon Baptist Church. He was a farmer and entrepreneur. For many years, he served on the Board of Supervisors for Dinwiddie County. His farm was adjacent to Henry Echols'.

CONNIE COLEMAN (Wife of Lennie Coleman)

For numerous years, she taught Sunday School at Sharon Baptist Church.

WALKER

Coworker of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.

MR. VAUGHAN/TOM VAUGHAN

Coworker of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr.

MR. PERSHING

He was the boss of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. There is a mention of him writing a commendation letter for Raymond at his retirement party.

MR. BAILEY

Coworker of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. on the toll road.

MR. CARR

Coworker of Raymond Henry Vaughan, Sr. on the toll road.

GENERAL IRVING

He was Deputy Post Commander at Fort Jackson, South Carolina while Ammon was stationed there.

SERGEANT MAJOR

This is how Ammon refers to his supervisor while he is assigned to the 10th Battalion. The man's full name according to military records is Eugene A. Shea.

SMAJ

Reference to Sergeant Major Bonwell at the 10th Battalion 2nd Training Brigade at Fort Jackson, South Carolina where Ammon was stationed.

JACK

A coworker of Ammon's while at Fort Jackson, S.C. He later writes to the SMAJ about the changes between Fort Jackson and his new assignment.

FIRST SERGEANT

Ammon's direct supervisor while in the Army at Fort Jackson, S.C. He takes a special interest in Ammon and helps him navigate the myriad of procedures and requirements. He also shares stories with him, particularly about being a guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Ammon is reassigned early in 1966, so their relationship is short.

Friends of the Family

WARREN RAWLES

Originally from Portsmouth, Virginia, he served as pastor of Sharon Baptist Church for many years. At the same time, he worked as a part-time parole officer and at the Dinwiddie Department of Social Services.

ANNE RAWLES (Wife of Warren Rawles)

SCOTT RAWLES (Son of Warren and Anne Rawles, close in age to Anne and Edgar Vaughan's children)

RODNEY "CHIP" RAWLES (Son of Warren and Anne Rawles, close in age to Anne and Edgar Vaughan's children)

REV. JOHN P. (Jack) MOODY

Replaced Warren Rawles as pastor of Sharon Baptist Church.

ALICE HUDSON

Member of Sharon Baptist Church. Married Bernard Jones during this time.

CLYDE TOWNSEND

Former classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School.

Other

THURMAN GIBBS

He owned the property that the Vaughans and others were trying to build a hunt club on. This is located a couple of miles northwest of the Vaughan homeplace.

ELMORE BOISSIEU

He was a classmate of Ammon's killed in a car accident during this time period.

THOMAS COUSINS

He was an African-American who did block work and carpentry for hire in the local area.

DANIEL

He was a local African-American who was often hired by the Vaughan family and others in the community to do odd jobs.

WILLIE ELDER

He attended Sharon Baptist Church for numerous years. At first, he ran a store off Route 40 between Darvills and McKenney. Later, he opened a grocery store in McKenney with Robert Wallace.

HARRY ECHOLS

He was a farmer who owned quite a large bit of property. His involvement with church was irregular. The participants interviewed describe him as quite a character. Although they did not share many specifics, it is implied that he got into many unique situations.

ALVIN MAYES

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School.

LOIS AVERY

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School.

PARKER COUSINS

He is described as a "character – but a good guy" by participants. His property was off of Route 40 between McKenney and Darvills. He is noted as having running water before anyone else, but no electricity. In one of his more creative episodes, he had run a line from a pump at the river to the upstairs of his home.

MRS. COBURN

Mother of Mary Lee Wallace, the wife of Carlton Wallace, Josie and Bob Wallace's son.

MRS. RUSSELL (Dorene Russell)

She is from England and married Gene, a state trooper in Dinwiddie. She served as the pianist and choir director at Sharon Baptist Church for years.

DR. HARRIS

Local family physician in Blackstone, Virginia.

DR. KIRKLAND (Physician at the Medical College of Virginia)

DR. COUCH (Dentist)

DOUG COBURN

Served as owner, operator, and writer for the *Courier-Record* newspaper for decades.

LINDA BISHOP

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

NANCY TUNSTALL

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

DONNIE DANIELS

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

BERNARD JONES

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

GRANVEL MAITLAND

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

RANDY KYLE

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

CHARLEY S.

Classmate of Ammon's at Sunnyside School

HAYES POYTRESS (Unknown at this time)

MR. AND MRS. WARDEN

Fishing companions of James Williamson, husband of Helen Joan Vaughan Williamson.

HOWARD TOMPKINS

Married a widow in the community (Debbie Dickerson) and lived across from the Fort Pickett tank range on Route 40.

GENE RUSSELL

He was a state policeman who resided in McKenney.

MRS. CONDROY

Mother of Mrs. Coleman

JOHN G. (Unknown at this time)

SUSIE (Unknown at this time)

SHELBY JEAN MARTIN

Sister of Laverne Ozmore's wife who contracted polio as a child and lived in an iron lung for many years.

COLES BISHOP, JR.

Lived near Franklin Townsend and farmed there most of his life. He attended Mansons Methodist Church.

LAWSON CARTER

Married Clifton "R.C." Chandler's sister and lived as a sharecropper or renter around the community during his life. Attended Butterwood Methodist church when he went.

BECKY HARDY (Daughter of Lewis Hardy)

GRAHAM (Unknown at this time)

FRED J. (Unknown at this time)

DONALD GAMMON

Member of Sharon Baptist Church and owned and operated a well-digging business near Williamsburg.

MARY SUE DAVIS GAMMON (Wife of Donald Gammon)

MARY KATHRINE GAMMON (Daughter of Donald Gammon)

Often referred to in the letters for her ability to sing.

JOHN A. LEE

He lived in Blackstone and was the brother of the town manager at the time. He was a contractor for Garrett, Moon & Poole.

JIMMY AND BETTY DOYLE

Ran a grocery store in McKenney for many years.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 10: Photograph of Jessie and Imogen Cliborne currently owned by the author.



Figure 11: This photograph taken in 1966 shows Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan shelling beans and Ray (Edgar and Anne Vaughan's son) sitting in the rocking chair. It is on the side porch of the Vaughan residence.



Figure 12: Edgar Vaughan is holding the camera and is surrounded by other members of Sharon Baptist Church in the church parking lot.



Figure 13: This photograph was taken at the funeral of Raymond Vaughan. From left to right are: Ronald Vaughan, Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan, Ammon Vaughan, Edgar Vaughan.



Figure 14: Picture of the Vaughan store and other businesses as they fronted Route 40 circa 1930s. Photograph is currently in possession of the author.



Figure 15: Photograph of Raymond Henry Vaughan taken in the 1920s. It is currently in the possession of the author.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The 1960s was a time of transition in nearly every area of life. The social values and systems of the United States went through rapid change in a short span. Southside Virginia was not unaffected by this. Regardless of their perceived isolation, residents felt the impact of these changes at times more directly and at others not at all by comparison to other areas of the country. Although residents had been through a complex series of changes in previous decades, the effects of those combined with the movements of the 1960s provided the catalyst that propelled these areas toward an improved level of living, comparable other areas of the nation, while maintaining their rural traditions, or led to the traditions' demise and the people's assimilation into urban and suburban life. This was not simply about technology or economics, for it involved a lasting and profound remodeling of the locality's family and social constructs.

Darvills, located in Southside Virginia, is a prime example of how larger themes in the country then affected even the most ordinary citizen. The Civil Rights movement, the war in Vietnam, and the counterculture are all evidenced in the sources here even though the individuals had no direct participation in any of those developments. Therefore, by examining this locality in this period we can better understand how the larger events and movements affected people in such places and how people there in turn handled the change in their community. In order to understand what happened, it is crucial to set the stage by showing the significant change the area went through prior to this time. For rural areas such as Darvills, this requires examination as far back as the Great Depression of the 1930s in order to get a sense of the landscape and culture. Here we come to understand the systems and traditions still used by these individuals as a foundation when the changes came later in the 1960s.

Rural Virginia had not felt the grip of the Great Depression as harshly as the rest of the nation. Reliance on subsistence farming and the production of consumer-driven products like tobacco, clothing, and food delayed the ill effects of financial peril. This differed from urban areas of the country where the collapse of industries like automobiles or steel caused a drastic and lasting financial emergency. Diversity and balance of industry with agriculture, along with the federal support, in many areas of Virginia allowed for relative protection against the devastation felt by other states. It is notable that Virginia's economic recovery in particular began as early as 1935 and seemed to increase in prosperity leading up to World War II.¹ Also, as noted by historian Melissa Walker, mutual support networks in the rural communities assisted families to survive during these struggles.²

For many, though, recovery did not begin until New Deal programs of the federal government were employed. The research and publications of Harry Hopkins and Lorena Hickok brought attention to the plight of rural communities. Their study of these conditions helped lead to the creation of the Works Progress Administration, Public Works Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and many more government initiatives. Indeed, David Kennedy explains that during the New Deal tens of millions of rural Americans received for the first time the modern comforts of electricity, updated schools, and paved roads, as well as unaccustomed financial stability.³ These New Deal initiatives allowed the rural public access to services and resources that were previously unavailable on such a wide scale. For Darvills, and the surrounding area near the town of Blackstone, this was the case. After the 1930s, reliable electrical systems, telephone lines, and improved roadways were just a few of the

¹ Ronald Heinemann, "The Great Depression in Virginia", *Encyclopedia Virginia*. (Charlottesville: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2009), http://www.encyclopediaofvirginia.org/Great_Depression_in_Virginia.

² Melissa Walker. *All We Knew Was to Farm*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 3-5.

³ David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 378.

ways the new technology was incorporated into the lifestyle of the residents. As an example, when indoor plumbing became more widespread, people adapted the structure of their homes to accommodate modern plumbing and heating and cooling systems.

Despite the South's knack for survival, by the late 1930s the problems had become nearly insurmountable. The Southside areas' reliance on agriculture as livelihood offered few alternatives when it was difficult to subsist. The region had been in predicaments before and had always managed to find a way out. Even in the Darvills area, however, reliance on neighbors and community resources had nearly been depleted. Everyone was in a predicament that offered no easy solution. In this instance, the salvation residents accepted came in the form of Camp Pickett and other related outposts of industry. Without the intervention of these government installations and businesses to revive the economy, the areas of Blackstone and its neighboring localities such as Darvills might have become extinct.

Tied to the impending crisis in Europe that would lead to World War II, military construction and the support systems for large bases would ultimately have the greater impact on Southside Virginia. One of the creations from war preparations was Camp Pickett, headquartered at Blackstone, Virginia, but occupying land in Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Lunenburg, and Nottoway Counties. The camp brought radical change in landscape, culture, employment, and industry for Southside Virginia. Military contracting had become big business, with the beneficiaries including the merchants near posts and communities where the Corps of Engineers was constructing projects.⁴ Military construction had significant impact on rural communities in the South.

The Civilian Conservation Corps had operated in all areas of Virginia but arrived in Blackstone during the late 1930s. The military, from the beginning, was the governing body of

⁴ Clotfelter, *The Military in American Politics*, 15-30.

the program, organizing and formulating its projects. Camp Pickett was an example of the CCC's approach brought to reality in Southside Virginia. The camp showed that government on all levels—local, state, and federal—could be combined harmoniously to produce a lasting positive economic presence. There seemed to be little local resistance to the work of the CCC. Only verbal criticism of expanding governmental powers and the fear of government overtaking individual freedom were noted in the local paper, the *Blackstone Courier-Record*, at the time. Providing for families and regaining financial prosperity prevailed with the local people.

Despite so much turmoil, the South in general during this time was a mix of tradition and progress. Rural areas maintained patterns of behavior while incorporating the new technology. It was not until World War II that widespread changes are seen at a local level. Indeed, government spending during the war was a powerful stimulant in the region's economic and political restructuring. Many historians have viewed it as another New Deal in terms of impact on the region.

When the area around Blackstone was first scouted by the CCC in 1939 as a possible site for military development, its location was critical. Located in the Piedmont of the Atlantic coastal plain, it is less than 100 miles from the Atlantic coast and the port city of Norfolk and an equal distance west to the Alleghany Mountain Range. Wooded slopes in these scouted areas provided the perfect backdrop for preparation of assault troops for fighting on both fronts of the war. The immediate area of the base was in rolling, partly wooded country, perfectly suited for field training and moderate- to large-scale maneuvers. The transportation systems already in the area, namely railroad and highway, made the area easily accessible and the transport of troops and materials much easier.⁵ Other reasons for the attraction between these new military bases

⁵ Defense Technical Information Center, compiled by the Post Public Information Office, Camp Pickett, "A Short History of Camp Pickett", 1951.

and the South were the diversity of soil and crops, transportation, abundant fish/game, three hundred different types of mineral deposits, water power potential, and petroleum deposits. Camp Pickett in particular provided a diverse array of resources with rare amphibians and soil types which remain protected. Additionally, forty percent of the nation's forests were located in the South and many of the areas had low industrial wages and property taxes.⁶ This meant cheap initial construction costs as well as low maintenance/replacement costs.

The New Deal's acreage reduction and incentives for mechanization contributed to the transition in the South from an agricultural and rural economy to a more industrial and urban one. Near Blackstone, after the 1930s fewer people focused on traditional farming and many instead turned their attention to mixing off-farm jobs with subsistence farming or even emigration to urban areas. These changes reinforced the attraction to military service and to employment in the defense industry. Southern manufacturing grew fifty percent during World War II, and wages in the region climbed forty percent. Historian James Cobb has argued that World War II catapulted the South beyond anything previously imagined, forming an energized economy from defense spending that caused another New South.⁷ Defense and military spending was over a third of total federal expenditures in the South and allowed for fifty-percent job growth in manufacturing.⁸ Pete Daniel explains that the war increased the tempo of change started by the New Deal and Great Depression, putting the rural families in contact with the wider world.⁹ It caused a reevaluation of values and mores and a selective approach to which elements of modern life would be adapted.

⁶ John Samuel Ezell *The South Since 1865*, Second Edition (Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 434.

⁷ Craig Pascoe, Karen Leathen, and Andy Ambrose, (Eds.), *The American South in the Twentieth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹ Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: the Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures Since 1880* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 258-260.

Postwar growth was evident in Blackstone and surrounding areas not just in the jobs available at Camp Pickett, but also with manufacturers who had transplanted themselves into the area. The South was an attractive area to them for many reasons. Outside of economic factors, the region was one area which symbolized for some the old American way of life. Honor, hard work, and a lifestyle which emphasized loyalty and family was a boon to companies who desired those characteristics in their workers. Other installations may have been as cheap to construct and operate as those in Blackstone, but the way the citizens there rallied together was impressive to outsiders. Reports of Camp Pickett's construction noted the extraordinary efforts of people to work extra hours without pay or to donate materials in order to have projects completed on time and in order. There was a sense of purpose cultivated during this time that prompted change and began the stirrings of reform such as civil rights.¹⁰

Southern politicians were enthusiastic in support of U.S. policy during World War II. Virginia Senator Carter Glass attributed this to the "Southerner's superior character and exceptional understanding of the problem."¹¹ One advantage southern congressmen had over their non-southern counterparts was seniority. In Congress, many chaired committees, allowing them to control revenues and decision-making. War contracts and military establishments garnered by the South added up to over twenty-eight billion dollars a year during wartime.¹² These liberal spending policies went against traditionally conservative southern values, yet the federal government's intrusion was welcomed by the region's politicians at the time. In fact, "to the masses, the fact that much of the philosophy of the New Deal ran counter to established

¹⁰ Neil McMillen, *Remaking Dixie: the Impact of World War II on the American South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 21.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 687.

¹² John Samuel Ezell, *The South Since 1865* (second edition), (Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 437.

southern ideals was no problem...they were willing to try almost any change to be saved.”¹³ This shows how desperate the situation was for most southerners at this time and how this situation predisposed a willingness to change or modify one’s value system in order to survive.

Installations like Camp Pickett were prized by federal officials for their open spaces and climate, and military installations appeared throughout the South. The leaders in southern states invited the use of its vast reservoirs of natural resources and cheap labor. Virginia ranked fifth in the nation for overall total federal investment during the war.¹⁴ In Blackstone and surrounding areas people supported these efforts, often opening their homes to soldiers and volunteering without pay to construct and/or labor on site to build and refurbish structures and roadways.

Many believe that the South was well suited for military growth. Its favorable weather conditions meant lower energy bills to heat barracks and other buildings. Even today, the South is described as “diverse terrain with few environmental constraints...offers both mounted and dismounted operations...closely resembling the eastern European theater.”¹⁵ Most important, however, was the mindset that made the South a better option. Although there was violence and racism that no one could deny, the South in general was a hospitable place. This was an attractive feature for the military, allowing latitude to accomplish plans without resistance and also provide an environment of rest and relaxation when necessary. The more conservative, practical approach prevalent among leaders of the military system appealed to southerners and made “enlisted men from rural and lower-status backgrounds react more favorably to the military” as opposed to other industries and systems.¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid*, 432.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 697-698.

¹⁵ John Pike. “Fort Pickett”, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/fort-pickett.htm>, accessed September 5, 2009.

¹⁶ Clotfelter, *The Military in American Politics*, 33.

The growth of military service and spending remained virtually unchecked the war, and by 1945 defense garnered 89.49 percent of total federal spending.¹⁷ Along with the expansion of the American economy and a near fully employed workforce, the war effort contributed to the rise of the “military-industrial complex.” This complex is usually described as a network of private companies, nongovernmental organizations, universities, and federal agencies. In Blackstone and nearby locales, the town and county governments, local businesses, schools, and other agencies worked collaboratively to establish the resources, utilities, and other systems constructed and used by Camp Pickett. This collaboration became mutually supportive and influenced politics and economics, allowing communities such as Blackstone to experience prosperity and become inextricably tied to the military as its primary economic generator. The government’s investment in the war was also an investment in these communities and the American people. Some have described this as “war socialism,” where the concentration of spending and reliance on military contracting significantly affected the postwar industrial structure.¹⁸ The relationship between the military, government, and localities became like the “old boy network” and a “revolving door” where relationships intermingled and continued beyond the scope of business into the social realm. This system continued regardless of political party affiliation in government offices. Leaders performed legislative maneuvers or political trickery in order to get the most coveted prizes—the contracts and military perquisites that went along with federal expenditures and services. This was definitely true in Blackstone as the red tape was cut through quickly for any and all projects the military sought to begin. Most business

¹⁷ Christopher J. Tassava, “The American Economy During World War II,” EH.Net Encyclopedia, Edited by Robert Whaples, February 10, 2008, 1-13.

¹⁸ Robert Higgs, “World War II and the Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex”, *Freedom Daily*, The Independent Institute, May 1, 1995, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=141>.

was conducted with handshakes and the honor of your word. The town did not exhibit any resistance to the federal government.

Camp Pickett was designed to be a military city, virtually self-contained and able to provide its own services. The landscape and available resources of the area made it prime for this application. This meant entire utility operations and multiple transportation modes. These feats were accomplished with speed and efficiency during the early days of America's participation in World War II.¹⁹ According to the design plan of Camp Pickett, local governments were allowed access to water and other benefits of construction with use of facilities. Bear in mind that although the town gained quite a lot out of this partnership, this was at a cost of lost lands, displacement, distribution of resources, and strain on the few retail operations in existence. At the time, there are also reports of explosions and other accidents that put many citizens at risk. During the Cold War era, there was also concern of living near an installation that could possibly be attacked. Pickett acknowledged potential problems but tried to address concerns. By incorporating the labor and opinions of the public, remaining fears were put to rest, and people had ownership in the changes. Thus the military leadership pacified those most affected and paved the way for further development. Another instance was the inclusion of Virginia historian Douglas Southall Freeman and descendants of Confederate General George Pickett in the dedication ceremony. This nod to southern history, including the naming of the installation, built upon the feelings of southern patriotism and nationalism, making this intrusion more palatable and bolstering residents' pride in the face of war realities.

It has been noted how small military cities like Pickett were "constructed with minimal disruption of the local economy – an important and little-known aspect of the way World War II

¹⁹ *Fort Pickett Brochure and Historical Report*. (Fort Pickett, Virginia: Department of the Army, 1976), 3.

was waged on the home front.”²⁰ Despite social strains, the community in general supported the base. Soldiers were often invited to have holiday dinners in local homes. Parades were held in honor of troops deployed. Volunteers often brought goods onto bases and were there to see soldiers off or welcome them back at the station. The rural atmosphere provided a warm, loving family support to those soldiers who were facing terrible wartime realities and the emotions that go along with it.²¹ Pickett specialized in training for overseas combat. Being around a community that embraced them at social functions and welcomed them into their homes for dinner often helped soldiers take their minds off of their uncertain future. Citizens were there to see them off and to welcome them back. Local social organizations worked hard to organize dances and events to further foster a nurturing relationship.

The U.S. government purchased forty-eight thousand acres in the counties of Nottoway, Lunenburg, Brunswick, and Dinwiddie collectively between 1939 and 1940 at an average cost of \$25.50 per acre totaling \$1.2 million dollars. This measures to approximately fifty-six square miles. The total cost of the project was \$44.5 million dollars. The sheer diversity and scale of the buildings is staggering. In addition to the usual barracks, recreation buildings, officers’ quarters, headquarters, hospital wards, and warehouses, a dozen chapels were onsite to provide religious services for all major denominations. Additionally, there were athletic fields and entertainment facilities, seven motion picture theaters with seating capacity of 6,200, a large amphitheater, a post bakery (23,000 pounds of bread a day) and the list goes on and on.²² Often overlooked by military historians is the concrete dam on the Nottoway River, created to impound seven hundred fifty million gallons of water, not just for the camp, but to supply Blackstone as

²⁰ *Ibid*, 52-55.

²¹ Bill Ganzel and Claudia Reinhardt, “Military Bases in Rural Areas During World War II”, The Ganzel Group, http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe40s/life_09.html.

²² Department of Defense, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas G. Bowden, 7. [What’s this?]

well.²³ This complex covered forty acres and was a massive undertaking. Two rail spurs were built to the camp in 1942-1943 to increase logistical efficiency and the rapid movement of troops. The four-runway airfield was completed late in 1942. In total, by the end of 1942 the fort had more than 1,400 buildings capable of housing 60,000 soldiers. It maintained its own water pumping, filtration and sewage treatment plants along with six separate firehouses. By the end of the war, an additional 300 buildings had been constructed, including female barracks and facilities for two prisoner-of-war camps.²⁴

Over half a million men girded themselves at Camp Pickett during World War II for the unknowns of war overseas in Europe or in the Pacific. New weapons were first tested, innovative techniques for training attempted, equipment maintained, and supplies coordinated all within the confines of this small city in the country. Although the actual figures are unknown, there is evidence to suggest that over eight hundred eighty civilians were employed on the base in 1950.²⁵ It seems realistic to estimate that there were a few thousand working there during its peak operations. Therefore, the camp's impact on such a small community and its outlying areas cannot be understated. The community came to rely on the economic benefits that the military provided. Jobs, financial stability, and steady influx of new opportunity and materials provided the means for this area to support itself.

One cannot look solely at the political and economic systems involved, for the social climate and cultural changes also played a part in the outlook and efforts of this unique relationship. At the time, the employees and local citizens alike viewed the victories of those trained at Pickett as their own vicarious victories. It boosted morale to feel that as seemingly

²³ *Ibid*, 7.

²⁴ Virginia Army National Guard, "History of Fort Pickett"
http://www.fortpickett.net/about_fort_pickett/index.html, accessed September 5, 2009.

²⁵ Defense Technical Information Center, 30.

small parts of the whole, they contributed to the success of U.S. forces and worked harder to assure more victories.²⁶ Feelings of patriotism were encouraged and celebrated. It felt good to be a part of something with more meaning than setting the dinner table or feeding cattle. In the end, minor irritations like convoys, soldiers' misconduct, and noise could be overlooked because something greater was being achieved out of it. This was not only in the case of wartime, but in the mundane postwar aspects of everyday operation.

At the end of World War II and continuing into the 1960s, evidence of the modifications in localities could be seen in diverse ways. Aspects of the South that made the region unique began to change. For Virginia in particular, it remained one of the more defense-dependent states in the nation.²⁷ Social and economic changes continued based on increased industrialization and urbanization. Populations in the region grew and redistributed. The farm population decreased twenty-two percent following World War II. Between 1940 and 1960, over a half million sharecroppers left their farms in search of better opportunities. For some, this was not a choice. They were forced off the farm.²⁸

Though Southerners at this time generally did not travel beyond their local communities, they stayed informed. They were "searching for a new definition of what it meant to be a rural southerner."²⁹ Traditional crafts, language, architecture, culture, and trades remained, but over time were modified as a result of increased communication with the outside world. As an example, later correspondence shows that traditional Sunday visits were shortened in order to

²⁶ Defense Technical Information Center, 25.

²⁷ Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 327.

²⁸ Melissa Walker, "Rural Southern Women, the Family Economy, and Economic Change," edited by Connie Lester, *Revolution in the Land: Southern Agriculture in the 20th Century*, 18th Mississippi State University History Forum, 2002, retrieved from *The Historical Text Archive*, Part I.

²⁹ Pete Daniel, "Not Predestination: The Rural South and Twentieth-Century Transformation," edited by Pascoe, Leathen, and Ambrose, *The American South in the Twentieth Century*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2005), 94 and 105.

accommodate the television programming in the evening. The interactions with extended family began to loosen and disband. Weekly interactions became further and further apart. Today it may be years before you see close relatives, mainly at a funeral or an occasional reunion.

Two areas that were heavily impacted by change and caused further shifts in Southern culture and tradition are agriculture, particularly tobacco, and gender roles. Southside Virginia was a part of Virginia's Old Belt.³⁰ What tied this region together was its reliance on Bright Leaf (flue-cured) tobacco. The product had been developed and marketed here. It was a common thread among the population, regardless of what other economic endeavors they tried in order to generate income.³¹ Tobacco cultivation required intense family labor, but also a workforce skilled in the specialties of curing and grading. It also necessitated an infrastructure of warehouses in the locality to market the crop. The labor-intensive practices continued into the 1960s. Several leaves of flue-cured tobacco were primed at a time – a process lasting five to six weeks. The leaves were transported from the fields using mule-drawn sleds. They were then tied to sticks and hung in barns for several days before being packed away.³² This routine is supported both by oral history testimony and by the local newspaper. Blackstone had tobacco warehouses and the pricing guides were posted in the paper twice a week. Farmers and their gains were also listed by name, so the community knew those who were cultivating and profiting from the endeavor.

Many different elements prompted change in tobacco as it was grown in Southside Virginia and throughout the South. Pete Daniel makes the observation that "government policy, more than mechanization, revolutionized tobacco."³³ He points out that in the 1960s, farmers

³⁰ Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 389.

³¹ Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 389.

³² Daniel, "Not Predestination," 99.

³³ *Ibid*, 99.

were no longer required to grade leaves separately. This meant that tobacco could be taken directly from the barn to the market. Allotments could now be transferred, meaning that smaller farms could be usurped by larger producers. The increased acreage eased the entry of mechanization further, and more direct interaction with tobacco factories forced many local warehouses to close.³⁴ Wallenstein supports this idea, and goes further to explain that the quota cuts caused smaller farmers to get out of the business and also weakened the overall tobacco quota program.³⁵ Melissa Walker does not downplay this, but also includes other factors such as genetic engineering, use of fertilizers and pesticides, allotments, and impact of mechanization.³⁶ In Southside Virginia, as evidenced by the correspondence, the effects were being felt and witnessed by its residents. Examples of neighbors leaving the farming business are mentioned. People who picked up work at harvest time were unable to do so. “Many rural communities that were fixated on agriculture either disappeared, or were absorbed by agribusiness, suburbs, or corporations.”³⁷

Gender roles were greatly impacted by change following World War II. This is traditionally thought of in terms of Rosie the Riveter and more urban, industrial roles. The issues surrounding gender traditionally attract less attention in rural areas. Scholars like Melissa Walker have found their niche by examining the long-neglected aspect of this change in Southern localities. In her work, she points out that the changes the South experienced as a result of New Deal programs and World War II brought unprecedented prosperity to the region and began to change the definitions of work. The “centrality of women to the complex southern farm family economy in the early twentieth century” is well documented. Women participated in three types

³⁴ *Ibid*, 99.

³⁵ Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 390.

³⁶ Walker, “Rural Southern Women, the Family Economy, and Economic Change,” Part I.

³⁷ Daniel, “Not Predestination,” 92.

of work: domestic, commodity production, and field work. Each was key to the survival of a typical family. Domestic duties centered around child rearing, cooking, laundry, and so forth. Commodity production was based on the creation and sale of goods to generate additional income. Field work meant actual labor on the farm, from seeding all the way through harvest. In some circumstances, like that of subsistence farmers, women's efforts were central to keeping the farm running. Before specialized commercial agriculture became commonplace, rural Southern farm families combined subsistence with market-oriented tasks to make a unique set of economic activities. This system was calculated not only to simply earn money, but to accomplish their goals of independence, well being, and family persistence on the land.³⁸

As a result of post World War II prosperity, women in the rural South began to explore their place in the family economy. The types of work they conducted changed. A mindset developed that anything not associated with producing income was not work. Primary interests shifted from commercial farming to off-farm jobs.³⁹ Correspondence indicates that the shift was indeed accurate. Factories and Camp Pickett in Blackstone provided ample opportunity for women in the locality to take on a full-time job outside the home. Many maintained their domestic and subsistence roles within the home simultaneously. Although the bulk of family income came from the outsourcing of labor to these larger complexes, the participants focused on home. Social conversation and interests seemingly ignored the role played within the business world in favor of maintaining the traditional status of women as central members of the family unit. More time is given to discussing food preparation and caregiving than their tasks at their full-time workplace. This is a balancing act in which rural Southern women are struggling to downplay their income-producing role in favor of continuing their status within the family and

³⁸ Walker, "Rural Southern Women, the Family Economy, and Economic Change," Part I.

³⁹ *Ibid*, Part I.

the local community in non-income producing roles. As these sources show, preserving mutual support networks and fulfilling family obligations remained central.

Chapter 3: One Family's Experience

In terms of document editing and oral history transcripts, my purpose is to provide the reader texts as given by those who created them with minimal editing. Source validity is paramount for a researcher. Mary-Jo Kline agrees in *A Guide to Documentary Editing* that “the documentary editor’s goal is not to supply the words or phrases of a vanquished archetype but rather to preserve the nuances of a source that has survived the ravages of time.”⁴⁰ Historical annotation of key people, places, and events will aid the reader’s understanding of context and relationships essential to grasp the experience of this community in its time and place.

Scholarly documentary editing is relatively new in relation to the field of history. It dates to the 1950 publication of the first volume of *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* by Julian P. Boyd and Lyman Butterfield at Princeton University.⁴¹ Early projects focused on the papers of the most influential people of the nation’s history. In the 1970s and 1980s, attention shifted to previously neglected studies of women, African Americans, and others. This led to their incorporation in this process as a relevant part of documentary studies. Taking this evolution one step further, the interest in untold stories has ignited scholars to examine the effects of events and social changes on local areas and varying groups of people. The general public’s interest in heritage and genealogy has generated awareness of local history’s importance also. The Vaughan correspondence documents an ordinary rural family in Southside Virginia, but contains a wealth of information through them that allows for both a serious reflection of topics and identifiable, relevant research materials for the locality. Researchers of all types can have a better understanding of everyday and extraordinary events through the eyes of these people.

⁴⁰ Mary-Jo Kline, *A Guide to Documentary Editing, Second Edition* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 5.

Additionally, in an effort both to confirm aspects of the information garnered from interviews and gain insight on the locality in general during this time period, the local Blackstone newspaper, *The Courier-Record*, is also a primary source. The owners of the publication have allowed me access to the archives in which copies of the originals are stored. There is currently no copy on microfilm. It is the only newspaper available specifically on that locality during this time. In the correspondence, the paper itself and its contents are often included as clippings or referred to in some way.

These transcriptions represent the communication between Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan (mother) and Ammon Cliborne Vaughan (son) from 1965 to 1967. During this entire time, Ammon was serving in the Army at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Several important declarations need to be made in terms of editing decisions by the author. All of the information printed on the envelopes is included with each of the letters for provenience. Additionally, letters from other family members enclosed in these letters are noted and transcribed for the reader. Newspaper clippings were noted, but not transcribed. Any other materials enclosed were noted, but were not included (photographs, check stubs, etc.)

After the transcriptions were completed, the letters were matched against them twice to assure no clerical errors and to make certain the integrity of the letters were maintained. The author made no adjustments to spelling or grammar. No words were italicized or underlined unless the writer used those formats in the letters. If the mistakes were thought to impede the reader's understanding, the correct word was placed in brackets directly after it. Scratch outs and insertions are noted in typical documentary editing style. Annotations are included to assist in a clearer understanding of certain elements involved in the correspondence. The paragraphs and sentences constructed by the writer stayed as written. No adjustments were made to spacing. If

punctuation was left out, it was also left out of the transcription. If elements were spaced differently, such as the date or signature, this is approximated for the reader.

In an effort to assist the reader's understanding or curiosity, samples of the letters have been provided after the contents section and prior to the transcriptions. They also include a series of photographs of the base at Fort Jackson which will aid in the visualization of Ammon's residence there and the layout in general.

Contents

The contents of the box of letters are listed below. They are divided for practical purposes by author and year. This gives the reader an overall idea of the materials and may reflect other areas that need to be explored or considered.

From Ammon Cliborne Vaughan to his parents, Irene and Raymond Vaughan, in single and/or multiple pages.

- May 24 1965 through Oct. 23, 1965 – Nineteen Letters
- Jan. 13, 1966 through Nov. 25, 1966 – Twenty-one Letters
- Jan. 19, 1967 through March 9, 1967 – Seven Letters and one envelope with no letter inside

From Irene Vaughan (mother) to Ammon Cliborne Vaughan in single and/or multiple pages:

- May 18, 1965 through Dec. 27, 1965 – Twenty-nine Letters
- Jan. 17, 1966 through Dec. 19, 1966 – Fifty Letters
- Jan. 9, 1967 through April 25, 1967 – Fifteen Letters
- One letter with no provenance or date

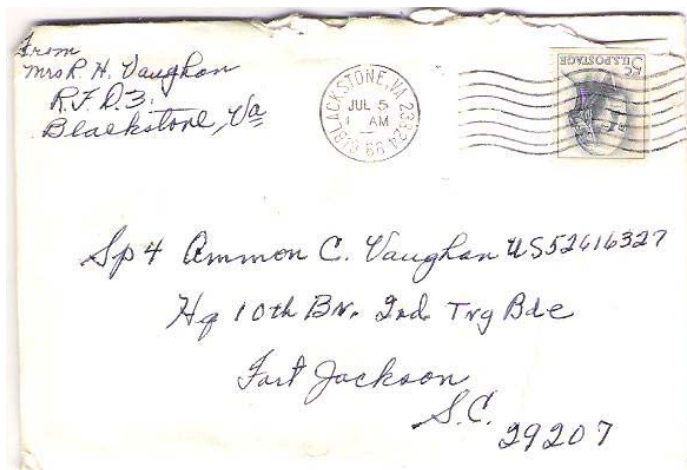
Other Correspondents of Ammon Cliborne Vaughan:

- Marianne Winn (neighbor attending R.P.I.) – Three from 1965 and eight in 1962 (earlier letters included to provide comparison)
- James R. Vaughan (brother) – two letters
- Helen Williamson (sister) – one letter, several written to Irene Vaughan sent by her to Ammon to read also
- Edgar and Anne Vaughan (brother and sister-in-law) – ten letters
- Jesse and Imogen Cliborne (aunt and uncle of Ammon) – two letters
- Douglas and Gloria Cliborne (cousin of Ammon and his wife, also close friends) – two cards with extensive messages
- Jean Eastwood and family (neighbors) – three cards
- Moore Family (neighbors) – five cards

- Sharon Williams (relationship unknown) – 1 letter
- Mary Powers (neighbor) – 1 letter
- Kathy Diskin (relationship unknown) – 1 letter

Due to the volume of material, only the correspondence of Alma Irene Cliborne Vaughan, Ammon Vaughan, and Edgar and Anne Vaughan have been transcribed here. For the sake of readability and flow of subject matter, the letters are presented by year in chronological order between all parties. In regards to future access, steps have been taken to ensure the availability for use of these materials for future work and generations. At present, all letters and transcriptions are on repository with the author. The Dinwiddie Historical Society will have copies of the transcriptions of multiple correspondents donated to their holdings under guidelines set by the agency and the author.

SAMPLE PAGES



not common.

How are you making it this hot weather? It has been real warm up here for the past few days. They tell me it was awful up here yesterday.

Did you get to go any place over the wk end? I do hope you did, I felt bad taking the trip down to J's and you not along. It sure was a nice trip and the scenes were simply beautiful.

And you should have been along and seen and heard your Daddy. He was a card. But really it didn't seem to bother him at all going down there for up which ever you call it. But J took us on a sight seeing trip yesterday, so you can imagine the rest.

But he is glad now that he went and he will have a lot to tell us when you come Loma La Ha.



FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
History Training Center

Tuesday

Dear Mom + Dad,

Got your letter and am glad to get the news. So the big wedding has taken place, well so much for that. Now that Paddy has the little tractor he won't mind cutting the grass. Probably won't have much to eat with the fall coming on. It's getting pretty dry down here, we haven't had rain in about 4 weeks. Cycle break is about over we're getting troops in all this week. I bought one of these Polaroid Swinger cameras like Helen had and the pictures are some of the results. Haven't gotten around to taking too many yet. Guess you can get a little idea about what it's like down here. I got the camera for a third of its cost and it's just like new. Be sure + keep the pictures. Glad to hear something about Ruth Anne, haven't seen her since Douglas's wedding. Maybe when I get home again I'll know where to go see her. How are the farmers coming along with the tobacco, slow I'm sure. Going to see James Biddle this week and see where he's going to ship to. He should get his orders this week. The clerk that works with me at H's is going to visit Nam, he's the one I got the camera from. He has got a good record player + radio that I'm trying to give him down on to. I finally put the curtains up in my room, I'd been waiting to get curtain rods at home. Can't think of



LETTERS: 1965 SERIES

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 18, 1965.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved 2 of your letters today. They were the first letters we had got. As I told you Sunday I didn't know your address until now. I had wanted to write to you before now, just couldn't, anyway I shall try to let you hear from us from now on.

I am so glad to know you are doing all right just keep it up. I know it will be rough some times, but knowing you I know you can take it. And I am proud you can. We are all very well, all except Edgars family all has colds again nothing serious. As he has gone to Washington D.C. for 2 or 3 days with Ed Morgan on [page 1] a business trip.

We have not heard from Helen & James sinse they were down here, and neither have I written I know she thinks I am awful. I thought I would have written tonight but had to iron a little and then I wanted to write to you, I'll try to write tomorrow night.

I got some good roasting ear corn seed last Thursday and Garland planted it for us planted the whole lot in it, so I guess we will have a plenty roasting ears. Ha, maybe it will be coming about the time you finish your Basic. Daddy was fixing S.E.s old swing cart⁴² this afternoon after he got from work, didn't take long to do it.

I picked a pan of beuries yesterday and made some peserves [*preserves*] tonight I guess I have about 3 gallons made. But boy am I sore in the back of my legs ha ha. (Missed having you to help).⁴³

We havenot had any more rain, and its really getting dry. I think the people were aiming to start planting their tobacco today, or at least the one's that I heard talking. They are a little late but I think the most of them treated thier land for rootknot⁴⁴.

I don't want to forget, Raymond Jr & Muriel & boys were up here the Sunday after you left. They had been down to Portsmouth [page 2] to see about the house. They still have not sold it. And you know we all went to Church that Sunday morning.

Ammon you remember Elmore Bossieu (Im not sure I have the name spelled right) anyway he graduated with Sanday Winn. Well he was in a auto accident Friday night. He and his girl friend, threw him through the wind sheild and killed him instantly, and the girl is in [*word cancelled*] M.C.V. [*Medical College of Virginia*] bad off, both legs broken. Don't know what else, seems that they were going real slow but met another car and the lights blinded her so they just went into a tree. They had witness or rather there were witness who saw it happen. He was buried Sunday afternoon [page 3] it so happened that he was in the N.G.[*National Guard*] with Edgar, in fact he was one of Edgars boys.

I called Anne Rawles and gave her your address.

I better go to bed. Will write more later. I thank you for writing me so I could hear even if I couldn't write. No I haven't heard any more from Ronald. Oh I got one of your checks and put it in the bank to your credit. Right at the moment I cant remember the am't [*amount*], but it was for 2 wks.

Write me every chance you get

Lovingly
Your Mama

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 20, 1965.

⁴² A two wheeled cart pulled by mules or horses at the lumber mill.

⁴³ This is a reference to Ammon's domestic skills, particularly in the kitchen. Numerous close family members have stated that he had a talent in this area, especially baking. Since this was an unusual gender role reversal for this area, he was teased by peers and eventually stopped performing the tasks unless there was no audience. Growing up, I remember well his ability to cook. He did not, however, make the effort in front of others or on a regular basis.

⁴⁴ A reference to a parasitic plant nematode, known to cause damage to plants and stunt growth.

Wednesday night

Dear Ammon __,

We recieved your letter today which you wrote Saturday. You ware doing real well. I'm so glad you are letting us hear from you. I know later when you get into your training real good you wont have [a] chance to do as well. But I will understand. Just as long as you are OK. Boy I bet you are very proud of your equipment and rifle by the time you go through all that training you will be able to come home and beat Edgar & Ronald target practiceing. Alltho I guess I'd have to leave home with all that shooting ha ha. How about your uniform? Did they have any trouble fitting [you *inserted*] up in clothes, when you get a picture of you in your out fit besure and send me one.

Your clothes came today or rather we got a card from express Depot yesterday, so Anne went and picked them up for us. Ammon was the bag zipper broken when you sent it? I decided [page 1] it must have been. Your clothes were all in there all right. But the bag is a total mess. I guess just well throw it away and you may guess it is all to pieces if I say so. Ha.

When I came from work this afternoon Mary and Ada was setting on Ada's porch so I went on over and talked with them awhile. And Jean was home. Of course they wanted to know how you were. So I let them read your letter. They were real glad and complimented your hand writing and how well you composed a letter, so Jean got your address. Allso Jackies Jean.

You asked how "Payton Place" was doing well I missed it last Thursday night as the W.M.U. [*Woman's Missionary Union*]⁴⁵ meet with me-so I couldn't turn T.V. on, but I looked at it last night. And from what I gathered they must have allready had the hearing on E. Carson and Cleared him, and the Harringtons have moved out of the big house in to an apt [*apartment*] over a store, and some other people are moving in the [page 2] Harrington house. And Constance & Elliot were married in a church wedding (this part I am glad of) But at the reception after the wedding Norman showed hisself,⁴⁶ because he is brooding over the fact that they say his mother killed Elizabeth. And Allison is still got a chip on her shoulder, and I think she might do something she will be sorry about. With Rod. And the minister who performed the cermony saw Betty, and seems like he might have fell for her. And Poor Dr Rossi seems like he has to go around helping the broken hearted ones Ha, that Drs daughter that is home visiting is a strange one, she seems to be interested in Dr Rossi. I think this about all of the highspots. I'll try to keep you up to date as they come on.

Anne, Edgar, Ray & Charles are all better of their colds. And Edgar did call James while he was in D.C. and talked to them. [him *cancelled*] They were all OK. I think I wrote you that he and Ed. had to go up there on a CocaCola trip. [page 3] Got to get to bed. Bed good and write when you can

Lovingly Mama.

P.S. Your car is OK. and isnt dirty as it hasn't been driven over 3 or 4 times and then only when I drove Daddys to work. Dad thought he might have had a chance to sell it for you that's why he told me to ask you, but I think the deal didn't Materialize.

⁴⁵ A religious and social organization for women based on principles of mission work. At least once a month they would meet and discuss various missionary works around the world or have speakers come in. This was also a time when they could get away from their households and associate with peers.

⁴⁶ A slang term in this rural area which means to act rudely or inappropriately to others. Usually it is accompanied by some sort of "scene" or "spectacle" at a social function.

Envelope handwritten with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US52616327 COC 10th BN 2DTNG BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked May 24, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Saturday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hope you'll are still doing alright. I think it was a good idea to plant that roasting ear corn out front, it will come in good for everybody. You must be doing right hard to get all that many strawberry preserves. Just don't over do it. I sure would like to be there eating some of them. It doesn't seem like it would be time to plant tobacco up there but I guess it is, I've been away three weeks. We have a commanding officer, a lieutenant, that looks like he could be Jrs twin brother. He looks exactly like him. Every time I see him I think of Jr. Wonder why Jr. can't sell their house at Portsmouth, looks like somebody would want a home down there. That was terrible about Elmore Bossieau, I knew him real well. You just can't think something like that could happen. Hope the girl gets along alright. I had to get four pairs of pants and two dress coats altered, other than that the clothes fit alright. Talking about shooting, I can [page 1] out shoot Edgar & Ronald now without coming down here, ha. Glad you got the clothes alright and didn't lose any. The bag was like that when I sent it. I don't know what happened to it, I just tried to zip it up and the zipper broke. So I just pined it up with safety pins. You just well to throw it away if you can't fix it. I don't know how they can compliment my writing when it is so messy. Glad you gave them my address, I'd like to hear from them. Don't know whether I'll get to write them back right away or not though. Peyton Place sounds like everything has happened, with a few minor things to happen now. But let me know what happens anyway. Glad to hear Edgar & Ann & the boys have gotten rid of their colds. It doesn't seem like it but this week has gone. I think this was probably the hardest week we'll have. Just getting into shape and getting the crooks [page 2] out. From now on I think it will be down hill. We went up to the air field today to witness a graduation, it wasn't as much as I thought it was. Kinda wish it had have been us. But our time is coming. You'll take it easy, I'll write more later. Oh! I wrote Warren & Ann a post card the other day, I hope I had the right address on it.

Love,
Ammon

Envelope handwritten with return address Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 COC 10th BN 2DTNG BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked May 24, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

There's nothing doing around here today so I thought I'd write another letter. If you get two in one day read the one with the earliest date on it first. We went up to see a fire power demonstration yesterday, it was right interesting. Haven't gotten a chance to go to church yet but am going next weekend. We are supposed to have post privileges by then, then I can find out where the right church is. I took out the savings bond, and made you co-owner so you'll be

getting one every month just like Ronald is getting. Our pay this month won't be too much by the time they finish taking everything out. You said that you had gotten about two weeks pay for me from the telephone company. Check on that amount because it is supposed to be for three weeks. How is the garden doing, I'm sure the snaps and beans had to be re-planted. I sure wish it would rain down here, the ground is nothing but dust and the grass has turned brown. [page 1] The Army is a good place for people without the high school diploma. The Lt. said you could get a diploma in three or four hours. We went to the dentist the other day and had our teeth examined. After that we got two more shots. I think I've gotten about 5 or 6 not counting the polio serum, and we haven't finished getting them yet. Kinda wish we were doing something today instead of lying around. Don't know anything else right now, write more later.

Love,
Ammon

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 26, 1965.

Tuesday night

Dear Ammon_

We just recieved your 2 letters. So very glad you are letting us hear from you, and to hear you are getting on all right.

I bet you have been sore from the shots and exercise. But as you say, thats part of the experience.

Did they find any thing wrong with your teeth? Hope not. Edgar couldn't help laughing when [you scratched out] he read your letter where you said you could already out shoot him & Ronald. Boy I will have to get some ear plugs when you all three [page 1] gets here together. With that target stuff, any way remember me when you all get together I don't stand that noise. Ha. Got a letter from Helen they were getting on very well, alltho she had been sick and had to give up her job, that with the ball games and such was to much for her, but said she was better. Allso said they might come home for the wkend, wasn't sure.⁴⁷

I gathered some more berries yesterday after I came home, also invited Ada to come and get some. So Ada, Jean, and I gathered about 3 or 4 gals [*gallons*]. That just about did it. A lot of them [page 2] just rotted because I couldn't get them picked. Aunt Imogen came up and got her about a gal or more. The rain we had last wk helped them.

We had a real nice rain. So tonight just before dark Raymond and I went out and pulled weeds out of the beets, and corn that you all planted. We didn't quite finish. Will try to finish tomorrow night. The squash are real pretty also potatoes. The squash are fixing to bloom, and Edgar & Anne put dust on potatoes Sat eve [*evening*], so that should [page 3] take care of the bugs.

Warren announced at church Sunday that he had recieved a [*nice inserted*] card from you, and that he had your address anyone wanting it could get it from him. Of course you know him, he had to tease me a little ha Ha. I think he really appreciated your writing to them. He allso

⁴⁷ This is the first of two references in this letter to Helen's health. Apparently, she had several difficulties that led to a hospitalization. It is suggested by other family members that this is from exhaustion or anxiety.

informed us he has accepted a job with the welfare board in Dinwiddie County to commence, some time soon after school is out. I am real glad.

They had to take Mary back to the Hospital for treatments. She wasn't getting on well at all. I guess they will do [page 4] the same thing for her that Helen had. I guess she will be O.K. now.

Ammon I got your other check in mail Sat. so I guess this is all. I am sending you the stubs so you can see and write me if this is right. if you want to send them back so I can keep them for you, you can. And how is your money holding out? Got enough to last till you get a pay day? If you need any you can let me know. Getting late and must get to bed. Be good and write when you can.

Lovingly
Your Mother

Envelope handwritten with return address of Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 COC 10th BN 2DTNG BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked June 1 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Saturday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well I'm still hanging on down here so far. Hope you'll are doing alright. We are all set to go Monday morning. We have been issued all our equipment including the M14 rifle. From the looks of it I needed it to deer hunt with. I'll probably get to fire it next week. We went up to the field house this morning to hear a talk by the Deputy post commander, General Irving. He didn't say much that I hadn't heard several times before. I just got to see a general in person is all. We have off this evening and tomorrow. We have our first inspection Monday morning. I don't think we'll have any problems getting by that. The food seems to have gotten back to the pretty good category. Don't send any cake or any thing to me while I'm down here. I wouldn't get to eat much of it, and the Sergeant says no. If everything goes alright we'll graduate the 9 of July. By the way whats been happening on Peyton Place, I don get to see any television down here yet. How is my car doing Daddy will get somebody to wash [page 1] it every know and then. If you can find a buyer at a good price, sell it. If not I hope to go [*word cancelled*] to the beach on it when I come hope. There's just one thing that's kinda different about the Army and civilian life. That is you can't go and do what you want to and when you want to. When we're out here marching or anything else, some of them dumb jokers around here don't know their left from their right. Then everybody gets fussed at because of some joker. You see all kinds of people in a place like this. You'll take it easy, I'll write more later. Don't mind the writing, it's just the position I'm sitting in.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 1, 1965.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letters and, they mean a lot to us to hear from you and to hear how you are getting on. I bet by now you have gotten some more kinks out of you that you didn't know you had Ha. Ha.

But you can take it I know, even if they are hard now. Have you all had any rain yet? Boy it was surely hot up here all the first of the wk last wk. But we had a nice rain Friday eve. & night and it has really cooled off. We had to put more blankets on [page 1] the bed and still have them on.

Right many people have finished planting tobacco now. And this cool damp weather is real nice on the fresh set plants.

[*word cancelled*] Odie Jr was over here a few minutes ago. He has about 2 more acres to plant.

I said something to Imogen & Estell about wanting about 25 more tomatoe plants to finish out a row, and "Boy" today here came a arm full of tomatoe plants, enough to plants 2 or 3 more rows, but we didn't plant all of them. Gee whiz.

Helen & James were down for the wkend, and getting on real well. And there were still [page 2] a few berries on the vines and you should have seen Kenny. He had a ball gathering berries. I was glad they got down here in time to get some. Oh! Let me tell you. James won a prize for having the best office in that Regional District up there. And the prize was [*word cancelled*] they gave Helen the use of a brand new fire Red Mustang with white [*word cancelled*] upholster inside with all expenses for a wk. and Boy she said she had a ball. Stay [ed *inserted*] in the road the [page 3] whole wk. She said it was a beauty, it was that expensive baby. You should hear her rave about it.

James allso has a chance at a all expense trip he & Helen to Parto Rica [*Puerto Rico*]. I believe he said the [*word cancelled*] contest ends in July and so far he is ahead. Wouldn't that be nice if he does win?

Oh. Ammon, Helen seems to be real interested in your car. She wants it for her self to drive. She offered your Daddy \$400.00 for it, but he told her he couldn't unless he talked [page 4] to you, so he told me to ask you, what you thought about that.

We got a letter from Ronald he was all right. But they Army is sending some of the companys from Ft Riley to Vietnam [or South Pacific some place *inserted*] they even got some of the boys out of Ronalds Battalions. He said several of the boys he know had been extended and were shipping out. He allso said there was a possibility that he might have to go but hoped not since his time was so short. He allso asked for your address, so when I write him, I will send it to him.

Aunt Erma, Dianne, Jereline, and Jean came down a [page 5] while yesterday. Was real glad to see them, and injoyed talking to them. "Pam" got her little kitten today. I know the kitten will have a good home, and Pam will really enjoy having it. We had gotten them real gentle. Kenny wanted to take one home with him. But you know James.⁴⁸

I didn't get to go to Spencers wedding Sat. as we had to work. I had thought I would like to have gone but could not. Can't think of any thing [page 6] else right now. So write when you

⁴⁸ This is a reference to James' peculiar habits. He did not like pets of any kind and was generally meticulous about appearance and organization of household items. Once he made up his mind about something, the decision was made.

can. All of the family sends love and we are thinking of you. I got a letter from Mamie and she was asking all about you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope typed and labeled with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3, Box 144 Blackstone, Va. To Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US 52616327 Co C 10th BN 2DTNGBDE Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 1, 1965.

May 30, 1965

Dear Ammon,

Thought I would write you a few lines while Edgar is watching a movie on Army Life. Know you would enjoy a movie like that now.

Well, Charles is almost through for the year in school. Know he will be last when he does get out. Since Jeffrey lives across the road I think it will help keep him company or to worry me about going up to play with him. Guess your mother wrote you that Mary is in the hospital again.

Ray is still a bird. He talks in sentences now and comes up with some pretty wild ideas sometimes. He talks about you a lot and still loves tractors. [Page 1]

I was telling my dream this morning and he said he dreamed about "tractors, tractors, tractors".

Well, Spencer jumped into trouble Saturday. We didn't get to the wedding because Edgar had to work but I heard it was real pretty.

Edgar is still pretty busy. He had a few free hours today. Week before last he went to LaPlata, Md. for 3 days for a Coca-Cola Clinic and has to go to another one next week. Think he enjoys them. On the last trip he had a chance to go to a night club in Washington with his boss and several men from Richmond and he wouldn't go.

Warren graduates the 13th [th *underlined twice*] of June. Guess your mother wrote you that. He and Ann are getting a new Plymouth next week. Franklin Winn made another sale. [Page 2]

Bible School starts on the 10th [th *underlined twice*] of June. We have to go to Richmond Tuesday to pick up the supplies.

Let's see, Linda Sue and Willis are getting married on the 12th [th *underlined twice*] of June and Donald Gammon and Mary Sue Davis are getting married the 16th at Sharon.

Edgar and Winn went fishing Saturday but didn't catch anything. By the way, Winn got himself a new Chevrolet with all the extras including an air conditioner. Don't care much for the new cars though.

Guess you know that Burniett Wainwright has moved to South Hill. Horace is still working for the Coke Co. but he and Edgar don't ride together anymore as Edgar get through work earlier than Horace. I think Horace works until 7 nearly every night. [Page 3]

How is Basic Training coming along? Truthfully?

We have planted a garden down here. It is coming along fine. We had some nice big strawberries this year. Hope the rest of the garden do so well.

Lee Gauldin has gotten his orders to go to Etheopic [sp wrong, Ethiopia *inserted*] (anyway it is a part of Africa). Phylis is really upset. If she goes with him it will be for 2 years

and if she doesn't his stay will be 18 months. She is hoping they will let him wait until after the baby comes in July.

Sharon won't have its 75th Anniversary until 1965 as they found and it was not built until 1891.

Edgar has put a new gimmick on the car now. An emergency [Page 4] light that works through the signal lights. It will work whether the motor is running or not.

Well, guess I have scribbled enough for one time. Will try to write more next time.

Take it easy and let us hear from you as often as you can.

Love

Edgar, Anne and Boys

Envelope handwritten with return address of Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 COC 10th BN 2DTNG BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked June 3 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Thursday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hope you'll are still doing fine, I'm still doing alright. Things are still going kinda slow, but they should pick up by Monday. I sent by clothes home yesterday. You'll probably get them before you get this letter. They are shipped C.O.D., so use some of my money to pay for them, and anything else that calls for my money. I just went up to the barber shop and got another skint head. Has anything happened at Darvills since I left? It rained for the second time last night. These bunks we sleep in are just to short, but that don't bother my sleep none. I don't want you'll working so hard while I'm down here, it should be easier now that it is nobody but you and Daddy. You'll probably spend most of your time now writing letters. Have you'll heard from Ronald lately? I sure hope when I get away from down here they will send me overseas. The time will probably pass faster and I'll get to see something to. Write more later.

Love

Ammon

[Second letter included]

Tuesday night

Dear Mom & Dad

How is everyone doing back home, hope you'll are doing okay. Things are still going pretty fair down here. We've gotten squared away, almost to start basic. We didn't do much today though. I'll be glad when we get to going so the time will go by faster. I hope all the people back at Darvills are getting along without me. If they can't, just hold on for about seven or eight weeks and I'll be there. Be sure and give everybody my address so they can write. Not that I'm getting homesick or anything, I'd just like to hear from some of them sometime. It rained about 3 minutes here today for the first time. We don't get as good food here as we did at the reception center, but I haven't gotten hungry yet. We do get to sleep a little longer up here, we don't have to get up until 5:30. It feels good to get up early down here. Our yogi bear platoon leader is a white man not a dark complected one. I think he's going to be a pretty good

fella. I'll write my address on the back so just in case you'll can't read it on the envelope. Write more later.

Love
Ammon

[Same return address is written on the back side of the letter]

[Third letter included]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Good to hear everyone is doing alright, I'm still doing fine so far. I sure look forward to getting your letters too. It rained here all day today over an inch or more. We have been getting showers pretty close together here lately. We get to go out on the range tomorrow and from now on. The time is really moving on now. Glad to hear Mrs. Powers is doing alright. I think Jackie would be wise in not doing much farming and stay in public work. I sure miss seeing him all the time. Talking about smoking, the biggest majority of some of these punks around here get on my nerves the way they smoke and drink beer. They think they're doing something big, they should see themselves as others see them. I guess you will be riding to work in style now with the convertible. I know Warren will be surprised at the party and gift. It doesn't seem like you have been working at the factory for [Page 1] five years. Know you were proud to get your five year gift and cake.

I finished writing this letter today, Wednesday, cause I didn't have time to finish it Tuesday. We went out to the range today and coming back it poured down raining all the way back. We got soaking wet and double timed all the way, about two miles, through the woods. It was kinda fun in a way. Don't know anything else, write more later,

Love,
Ammon

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 7, 1965.

[Enclosed is a cut out article "Miss Carolyn Neely Weds Mr. Wallace" from the *Courier-Record*]

Sunday evening

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter Friday. I am real pleased that it does not take so long for your letters to come from down there here. It makes it seem like you arint so far away.

We injoy your letters too. They seem just like you are sitting here talking.

Saw Doug & Gloria at church this morn. and they were asking about you. Allso told me he had seen Harold since he got home. And that he told him of seeing you, and [page 1] and how well he thought you looked. I am so glad to know every thing seems to be agreeing with you. I'm not sure about Jackie, as to [*word cancelled*] whether he has finished planting his tobacco or not. He isn't going in for a lot of farming this yr, and I think it best if he is going to hold on to his public work.

I heard Anne say they think the treatments are helping Mary, and I am thankful.

Yes James was telling us that he and some of the men up at Williamson went fishing up at his house and they had real good luck. Then he and Jeff fished in Mr Moores [page 2] pond on Monday afternoon, but didn't get any fish that was of any size much, most all small. But it was so cold, and still is cool have to sleep under cover.

Yes Dianne is married, was married last fall, and I can't hardly describe her. She isn't what you would call pretty nor is she ugly, sort of in between.

You asked about who Pam was? She is Bill & Roselyns [Colemans *inserted*] little girl.

Yes Spencer has his house ready, but thier bedroom furniture hadn't come in. They had it ordered. I guess it has come in by now. I am [page 3] sending you the clipping from the Courier of their wedding.

I am glad you got a chance to get out a little. Especially happy to know you went to Church, keep it up and go every chance you get.⁴⁹

You did get a big check didn't you? Arint you glad you don't smoke? it wouldn't go very far if you did.

I don't know whether Helen will still want your car or not. Daddy just told me to ask you in fact she wasn't as enthused after she found out how many miles it has on it.

It is doing fine tho and Daddy drives it enough to keep it [page 4] from rusting or battery going down, in fact lately I have had to drive to work, as have had to work overtime, several days and on Friday. As everything is the same old thing on Fridays. Lousie has gotten her a new Dodge convertible. White & black hot stuff. Things will be something now I recon.

We are going to [scratch out] get together and give [*word cancelled*] Warren a graduation gift. And I heard that some of them are going to give him a little party after bible study next Sunday night. I know he will be tickled. [page 5] He doesn't know about it. It is to be a surprise.

Bible school starts Wednesday at church, and will go through the next Tuesday.

And both of Anne's & Warrens children have chicken Pox. And Anne wont be able to help with the bible school. I know she hates that.

What do you think I had a surprise Friday. I was busy at work when the office girl came back where I was and brought a little note and said Virginia Daniel, you remember [page 6] (a former Supervisor) of mine would meet me out front of the factory and take me up to Cabells & Ediths for lunch. So I went and enjoyed it so much.

And on Thursday we had our 5th yr anniversary and had a cake and were presented our pin, necklace, or bracet. Which ever we had chosen. I had chosen a necklace, and I like it a lot, its real pretty. Only those who had been with the company 5 yrs. had any part in it. [page 7] Edgar had another wk end of Drill today. And yesterday he planted the corn. Daddy had been busy fixing Garlands combine. You know one thing? I think I will get about 40 cats and bring here to get rid of some of the birds. They have eaten every cherry time they started getting a little pink and every body else are making the same complaint.

Guess I'd better stop for now. Take it easy and write when you can.

Lovingly Mama

⁴⁹ Irene believed in going to church and repeated made Ammon aware of his obligation to attending and being a part of one. He was an active member even as a teenager, and after returning did a variety and volume of work for Sharon Baptist Church.

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 14, 1965.

[Enclosed are three cutouts from the *Courier-Record* newspaper, one entitle "Sky Divers to Perform at Air Show Sunday", another "Levi Workers Receive Pins for Service", and also "Darvills News"]

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

How is today serving you? Did you get to go to Church? I didn't sorry to say. But we slept late, poor excuse, but I will tell you why then you will understand.

Late yesterday afternoon as I was trying to clean up a little the telephone rang and it was Jr. They were fixing to leave to come up, so they didn't get in until late. Therefore we slept late. Tonight is the big night for Warren, he gets his Deploma. I think to date we have \$83.00 [page 1] for his gift.

You asked what sort of job he had. Really I don't exactly know just what his duties will be but it is part of the welfare work for Dinwiddie County.

You talk as if you are having some excitement. You will have to tell me more about it when you come home.

I havint heard anything more from Ronald since I wrote you last. Hope he hasn't been sent anywhere; I'm having a little trouble trying to write, as Johnny is staying down here with us while Jr & Muriel are [page 2] are going to Portsmouth tomorrow for a couple of days, and he is asking a lot of questions. I hope I make sence in what I write.

Linda Sue got married yesterday. As I was coming back from work she & her husband were coming out of the church door and the people were throwing rice. She looked right cute.

Edgar, Anne, Jr. Muriel, & children went up to the airport this afternoon to the air show. I think they liked it very much. I didn't go as I [page 3] didn't think I would like it too much, so I just stayed here and rested.

I might as well stop will try to do better later. Let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama.

Envelope typed with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3, Box 144 Blackstone, Va. To Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co C 10th BN 2DT NG BDE Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207 postmarked June 17 1965. TLS

June 13, 1965

Dear Ammon:

Hope you are getting along O.K. on your basic. Everything around here is pretty quiet. Edgar is watching Candid Camera.

When I told Charles what you said about him and his girl friends, he said that it would be O.K. because he would see them next year in the second grade. We haven't gotten his report yet

but have no doubt that he will be promoted. This is [xxxx *typed over mistake*] the first time I have ever known them to mail the report cards. Guess we will get them tomorrow.

Raymond Jr. came down last night. They are taking a weeks vacation. Guess Mrs. Vaughan will write you all about that. Johnny is staying a few days while Raymond and Muriel go to Norfolk or rather Portsmouth. Am looking forward to his staying down here during the day as Charles gets so lonesome anyway. We started Bible School last Thursday. Making out pretty good too. We have about 45 persons counting the workers. We have two more days. I am working with the Primary's this year. Charles seems to be enjoying his mother teaching him too. Delores is helping me and I mean she is sure doing a lot of the work for me. She is doing the Commencement which will help so much as I dread getting before all those parents anyway. We are going to ha e [*have*] the commencement Tuesday Night.

Well, Warren will be getting his diploma tonight. Both his knees have been knocking.

We went to an air show at Camp Picket and all of us look like big red Indians now. My nose will never be the same anymore. I knew people who kept their noses in the air could get burnt but never thought I would be one of those. It was a thrilling performance though. I have never seen such a daring [xxxx *mistake typed over*] bunch of men in my life. It was well worth the admission.

Mamie is home again. I saw her a few minutes tonight but didn't talk to her long as I had to go home and get Charles to be. By the way Edgar and Odie [xxxx *mistake typed over*] went fishing tonight but I didn't see any fish when they got home. They went to Stephen Cliborne's pond.

Bill Prosisie got a new car. Guess Carol wrote you. I think it is a dark blue Ford. Anyway it Is a 1965.

Will try to finish this. Haven't had a chance because of the Bible School. That is over with now. We had a real nice Commencement. Then after that we had a reception for Warren. Boy was he surprised! The Church also gave him a nice money gift and the Choir and Young People's Class gave him a Camera and film.

How did you rate driving for a non-com? Where did you get the pull? Ha. We are glad that you are going through basic with the attitude you seem to be taking. I think that will make it seem easier anyway.

Charles and Ray have enjoyed having Tommy and Johnny to play with. Last night Raymond Jr. and Edgar went down to Petersburg together. He didn't have drill but had to go to get some work done. Muriel told me she is planning to go to work. I was sorry to hear it as she seems so rested and happy since they moved down to Tennessee and I am afraid I told her so. She said that Raymond felt the same way but she was going to try it and see how it works. She will be [Page 1] working shift work in a Plant. Don't know what kind of Factory it is though.

Saw Everett (spelled wrong) the other night. He had his girl friend with him. She seems to be such a sweet girl. Isn't her name Betty? Anyway it was Beula's daughter.

Mr. Hoover is in the hospital with pneumonia. I hope he is better. They said he was very ill when he was taken Monday Afternoon. He is in MCV.

You don't have many more weeks in Basic do you? Know you will be glad to get on with it and get it over with. Ronald only has about 7 weeks left I believe.

Well, Dorene and Gene have gone on Vacation and Ann and Warren have gone also. Know we will miss them for the next two weeks. We still have some supply Preachers. Never heard of either of them. When Ann and Warren left yesterday Scott was sick and Rodney had the chickenpox so they were going to take them to his mother's and then go on a trip.

Well, Guess I have just about written you all I can think of. Oh! Charles's report card was mailed out this year. He got another excellent one and of course passed his grade. I hope he will continue to do so well in school.

Last night up at your house, Ray pulled up on the couch without his braces on and walked around the side of the couch. Of course it wasn't far but he did do it. Know your mother will write you about it though.

Well, guess I have babbled along too much now so will try to get this in the mail. Write when you can and take it easy.

Love,
Edgar, Anne & Boys

Envelope typed with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3, Box 144 Blackstone, Va. to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US 52616327 Co C 10th BN 2DT NG BDE Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207 postmarked June 20 1965. TLS

June 29, 1965

Dear Ammon:

Well, how is the Army treating you now? Everything is pretty quiet around here. The boys are asleep and Edgar just left for work. Thought I would write before the boys started sturring and getting my mind on other things.

Edgar has gotten interested in softball now. He is playing with the Darvills Team. They are suppose to have a game tonight so guess I will go and see what they really do. Last week they playing Dinwiddie and won the game. I believe they play Rocky Run this week.

Sandra is home from Rhode Island for a few days so we went up to see her yesterday. She has a real sweet little boy. He and Ray had a good time playing together. Ray finally got tired of

playing and pushed him away. He is only 5 months old so guess he thought Michael was a little too young to play with him. Their interest just weren't the same.

Mr. Hoover is home from the hospital now. Think he is doing fine. They are keeping oxygen there for him all the time now. Mary Kathrine Gammon was in a wreck week before last and just came out of the hospital Saturday. Warren called from Portsmouth to see how things had been going. Fine, I told him except all of the members of the church tried to go to the hospital while he was gone, so after I told him about Estell being in the hospital he came home yesterday as she was going to be operated on then. Haven't heard how she is doing but hope she is fine.

Jackie and Jean and boys left this morning for a trip to the mountains. Mary is staying up there by herself. I feel like Jean had to get away for a day or two because she has an awful lot on her now. [Page 1]

So you don't have but a week and a half of basic training left. What part of the Army do you want to specialize in? We never heard you say for sure what you wanted. We hope you get it anyway.

The boys are really excited. Dick Powers is having a Birthday Party this afternoon and I am planning to take them to it. Ray was singing "Happy Birthday to Dick" when I put him to bed last night.

Well this is short but know I had better get some work done before the boys wake up.

Take care and hope to see you in a few more days.

Lots of Love,
Edgar, Anne & Boys

Envelope with return address states From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 2 Blackstone Va
[*underlined twice*] to Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. C. 10th BN. 2 DT. NG. BDE Ft.
Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 21, 1965.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

Got your letter Wednesday. Boy they do come on in a hurry. And am so glad they do. You know how much your letters mean to me.

I know you have heard me complain about Ronald not writing. And I still havint heard any more from him. Do wish he would let us hear from him.

I am so glad Mrs Moore wrote to you, and I know it was interesting am allso glad you answered her's.

Mr Moore came over here a while Sat morn. I didn't speak to him as I was busy in the house & Edgar & your Daddy were outside so he stayed out side with them.

Warren & Anne are off on thier vacation, and we had a boy from [page 1] BlueField who is studying the Ministry to preach for us today. He reminded me a lot of Everette P. I didn't stay to preaching as Edgar & Anne wanted to go see Claude and wanted us to keep Charles &

Ray. Therefore I came on home after Sunday school. They found him getting on fine.⁵⁰ Erselle went with them up there to see her sister. Yes Jr went to Portsmouth to see about his house he sold it, but don't think he made a thing, in fact I think he lost just don't mention that part in your letters. You know how he is. I was sorry, he sure does have hard luck.

You asked about the grass. It came up but the dry weather [page 2] just killed it. We have a nice stand of weeds both here and at the cemetery. Ha. I thought it was a little too late but we have to take a chance. It doesn't look too bad tho by keeping it cut down.

Ammon I think you can get a refill for that pen I got for you. If they don't have them down there, when you come home we can get some here. Glad you have some one near by who can sort of liven up things a little.

Yes better to get my name in the once than never Ha.⁵¹ I don't believe the car is a convertible, I believe its just a two tone thing. I don't know much about cars Ha. The garden is doing very well we have all the squash we know [page 3] what to do with, and some cucumbers. The snaps are blooming with some little ones on the vines also beets. We planted some more stuff yesterday, 3 rows butterbeans, 4 rows peas, 1 row muskmelons.⁵² I know its late, but I thought I'd try it.

We didn't have to work yesterday. and I understand we wont be working any more over time. Will miss that extra, but I'll have more time at home. The Big [*word cancelled*] Dogs in California are really romping on the Management up here so I don't know what might happen. All of us might be out of a job.⁵³

Edgar & Daddy put soda on about 2/3 of the corn and plowed it yesterday, said they would wait a few days before doing the other as it was smaller. See we planted two kinds of corn, therefore part of it is growing faster.

While Jr was here he started to laying [page 4] the foundation for the porch. He was really thrilled that we are doing this. If it hadn't rained he would have done more but it rained all the time he was here most.

The Telephone Man came and moved the box Friday. Raymond got Corling Riddles truck and went to Dinwiddie to get the lumber yesterday. We have got to get the door & window now and other little things we will have to get such as flooring, insulation, building, papers, ect. In fact I'm afraid the thing will cost a lot more than I thought, but if can get the hull up can do the other as we can.

The Bible school was a great success. As you know the Butterwood [page 5] children came in with us, and we had a nice attendance and every one was complimenting the commencement excercises. It was real good and I learned a lot my self about the meaning of different things in church affairs.

The reason I hadn't said anything about Payton Place is its sort of jumbled up. One thing is Allison still is sort of acting up. An the new couple that has moved in the Harrington house and taken over the running of the Peyton Mills are becoming involved in the things in Peyton

⁵⁰ Claude was born with multiple disabilities. His case was so severe that he was hospitalized from birth. He has never spoken or communicated. Occasionally, as a youth, he was brought to Irene's home to visit. His visage scared me as there was a lot of paraphernalia, including a helmet, he wore. Other than the usual formalities, no one speaks or has spoken much about his condition or the effects of it on the family.

⁵¹ This is a reference to an article in the *Courier-Record* about the Levi Strauss plant's anniversary celebration in Blackstone. Irene is referenced as one of those receiving a five year service gift.

⁵² Similar to a cantaloupe.

⁵³ Again, a reference to the Levis Strauss plant in Blackstone and the uncertainty of its continued operation. People were continually concerned about losing a job or gaining employment.

Place. And Thursday night, I believe they are in the same shape. That Connie [page 6] & Elliot is in the how of Allison's birth. I think their little deaf girl was born out of wedlock. And another former resident has come back in to Peyton place to stir up trouble [just like the Handy Boy *inserted*] I can't think of his name. Any way when they get into it deep enough I will remember and you will [can *cancelled*] know by what I've already told you. Then one of Rods & Bettys former girl & boy friend has gotten married, and the girl came to the same Hospital that Betty works to have her baby. I [*word cancelled*] felt so sorry for Betty. She almost broke down. Then to top it off when the boy came to see the baby Rod came with him and Betty had to show them the [page 7] baby. It was so sad for Betty. And of course Rod didn't know that it would be Betty to have to show them the baby. I believe this is the biggest things that I can think of right now.

Every one is asking about you every time I see anyone. So take it easy, and write when you can.

Lovingly,
Mama

Envelope handwritten with return address of Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 COC 10th BN 2DTNG BDE Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked July 3, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Saturday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things are coming pretty close to an end down here now. We got back to the barracks today, Friday, about 10:30. It was quite an experience in many ways. I'd say the hardest part was the walking at night. We'd march out to some place about six or seven miles away from camp and stay about till eleven or twelve at night. Then we'd hafta march back, dark as dark can get. It was right hot too, it stayed in the 90's. It wasn't bad though just the inconvenience of cleaning up after you get back. I think just about everyone was pretty well pooped today when we got back, including me that's why the writing isn't pretty good.

I got my orders today, I'll be here at Fort Jackson going to the telephone school or lineman. It's just up the road from where I am now. [page 1] I'm kinda glad in a way I'll be staying here for school. I'll be finding out more about it before the week is out.

I got a box of oatmeal cookies from Mr. & Mrs. Hoover today. There is nothing like those cookies, I could eat a barrel of them. I sent Mr. Hoover a get well card and thanking them for the cakes.⁵⁴

I'll probably be coming home on the bus next weekend and will probably get there sometime Saturday. I'll let you know something more definite later on this week. Tell Ann I probably won't write any more this week since I'll probably be coming home.

Love
Ammon

⁵⁴ This is one aspect of Ammon's life that remained unchanged. Up until the end of his life, he ate at least one Little Debbie oatmeal cake a day. That was his afternoon snack.

Envelope with return address of From Mrs R. H. Vaughan Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*]
R.F.D. #3. to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Co.C. 10th BN. 2 D.T.N.G B.D.E. Ft.
Jackson S.C. 29207 postmarked July 7, 1965.

Tuesday night

Dear Ammon_,

We just received your letter today, and I just jumped up and down when I read where you are going to get a chance to go to school. I feel like it will help you. Raymond wanted to know what was wrong with me when I clapped my hands.

Am also glad you will be about over your basic by the time you get this, and will soon be heading home for a [*word cancelled*] few days. And I'm glad you will get to stay at Ft Jackson for a while at least.

I just got a call from Virginia Meredith wanting to know if I wanted to go with her to Johnson City [*word cancelled*] tomorrow. But I don't see how I can as we have Thomas Cousins here working on the room's or rather the room and hall. I would like to get the shell up and we can get the inside finished later. As I'm afraid he might charge too much, to get it all done and I think we can finish it. [page 1] I had to call Doug & Gloria tonight and tell them you would be coming this wkend. Gloria said tell you you better come to see them while you are here.

We washed your car Sat eve, and put it out front in a different place and Jackie came down to the house to see you, he thought because the car was moved, you must be home Ha.

We had a very nice day up at Cabell's Sunday. And all that good food. All of the brothers and sisters were there, and we enjoyed it.

Still no news from Ronald. Maybe he is courting so strong he just don't have time to write but I do wish he would drop me a card.

Wont write any more now. Will wait and tell you

Hopeing to see you this wkend.

Lovingly
Mama

[Enclosed is also a postcard from Mrs. R. E. Moore]

Dear Ammon

Enjoyed your card. Thank you for writing.

Heard yesterday you were expected home soon hope you can. Darvills is about the same, a little dry, but cloudy this morning.

We have another wedding soon. Judy Taylor is marrying a boy from Richmond. That surprised us all because of her and Bobby.

Hope to see you when you come back. Mr. Moore is saving a big fish in the pond.

With love

Pearl T. Moore

Envelope handwritten with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US52616327 Co A 16th Sp
BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, South Carolina 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3
Blackstone, Virginia postmarked July 26, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

I sure enjoyed being home those few days, they sure did go by fast though. I made it back down here alright Thursday night, I stayed in town over night. And guess what, this school isn't field communications like I'd thought and hoped, it's a personnel [sp *inserted above*, I *cancelled*] administration school. I don't know what that is going to be, and I'll just have to wait and see if I like it or not. I don't know why they put me in something like this, guess that's the Army I guess. I just hope the time passes fast. I'll probably learn something from it though. The school lasts for eight weeks.

I don't know anything else right now, I'll write more next time.

Love
Ammon

[Second letter enclosed]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Good to hear from you'll and that you're doing alright. Things are going pretty smooth now, which I'm glad of. You didn't have to worry about me not getting that bus that wasn't any trouble. I hope I didn't put Daddy to much trouble getting the car. I would have called but actually I didn't think about [it *inserted*] because my mind was in a thousand places, you can figure how [it *inserted*] is. I'm having trouble getting my its in the sentence. Also I'm trying to space the calls beause they sorta make a fellow get that sickness you have from being away.

Columbia is a pretty nice city from what I saw, not too much difference from Richmond. The people seem to be pretty nice and are in no hurry and they have that southern drawl talk. You can't help but listen to them close when they talk. It [page 1] wouldn't take me long to pick the way they talk up.

I'm sure I'm at the right place because I've already checked. This PASC [*Personnel Administration Specialist Course*] course is the MOS [*Military Occupational Specialty code*] that was on my orders. It doesn't make a lot of difference that I didn't get the communication course because I'll probably learn more from this other course. It's just that I'll be inside working instead of outside probably. The course itself isn't supposed to be as hard as the BAAC [*Basic Army Administrative Course*] course that is taught here with us. Typing is the main thing and English is next. Most of the English so far is same thing we had in High School. Typing is taught from the beginning because a lot of the boys can't type. But the ones of us who have had typing have to go right along with the rest. I was a little rusty the first day or so but after that it came right back. They give us a test every Friday on what was [page 2 *arrow drawn*] covered during the week. I didn't have any trouble passing it but I still had to study the English and other subjects that were covered. Some of the boys failed it. One thing about being over here it is a lot easier and not as rushed as basic training but I guess that's natural. We got to class 8 hours a day with a 10 minute break in each hour. 4 hours of typing so its not hard at all, I just hope it stays that way.

We got paid [*word cancelled*] yesterday, I got \$57 not including the bond that was taken out. I bought myself a watch today, it sold for about twenty some dollars but I got it at the PX

for \$11 and some cents. It's a Timex like they advertise on TV, seems to be a pretty good one. I needed one because everything is run on time and it helps to have a watch.⁵⁵

Good to hear Mamie is doing alright. Seems like she is having a rough time here lately.

Guess Ronald is glad he's getting out. He's supposed to be able to take teasing because he's a veteran of 2 years service in the Army if that means anything, ha. [page 3] I wonder if you could send me some civilian clothes without too much trouble. If you will, send 1 pair of pants and 1 short sleeve shirt. Get the light brown new pants and maybe that new shirt I was wearing some while I was home. I'm enclosing some money to send it. Also send me some stamps if you have them. Don't go sticking the money in the bank now. I'll send some later on to replace that I used coming down here. I gotta see how it runs. [Don't *cancelled*]

Seems like things are getting rougher over in Viet Nam tell Edgar he's better watch out they might activate his Unit. ha Don't know anything else. Write.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked July 26, 1965.

Tuesday night

Dear Ammon_,

We just recieved your letter. I had been waiting to hear from you. As I knew your address would be different now, or rather part of it would be, and didn't know if you would get it. I thought maybe you would call me when you got to camp and let me know how you made out after your round with the Bus.

Was so very sorry you got messed up like that. I wished then that I had stayed here that day and took you to the bus. One thing I am satisfied. Now that you can work out problems when they accour, and that means a lot.

You didn't tell me any thing about [page 1] Columbus. Was it a pretty city? Well so the school isn't communication I am sorry too. But I am sure you can get right much out of the [personal *cancelled*] Personnell Adminestriion school. Just try to absorb as much as you possible can. And it will help you in any business you might get into. I have just finished reading up on it.

Ammon, Edgar just came in and read your letter. And he said tell you to recheck your orders that they gave you when you came home and see for sure if it said Field Communication, and if it does, you better get behind someone and ask them to show you your orders where is says Personnell Admin because you could be awol from the school you are sopposed to be attending.

So you better make sure about [page 2] that.

I hope every thing is OK. But I know you will find out, but he says these things can happen, and it will be up to you to find out.

⁵⁵ Another reference to the attributes associated with owning a watch. It is interesting to note that this is another aspect of Ammon's life that remained unchanged. In fact, out of all the gifts the author gave him it was only the watch for his birthday one year that he remembered. It was also one of the last things he was able to identify before he died. This was one of the objects the author inherited after his demise. It remains with the author.

Let us know [*word cancelled*] if everything is OK.

Anne & I went to see Mamie Sunday, and she is looking lots better. Alltho still in the Hospital.

Got a letter from Ronald Friday I think you sort of got under his skin as the saying goes. I was afraid you would. He didn't say much tho. I guess he remembered Ha Boys" Boys",

He said he had gotten his papers started to get out of service and if all went well he will be home around the 9th or 10th of Aug. Take it easy, and write. We sure did enjoy having you home.

Lovingly Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 2, 1965.

[Enclosed is the "Darvills News" from the *Courier-Record* newspaper.]

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

How are you makeing it? Every thing OK? Wish I could talk to you, but don't have a way of getting in touch with you. One reason is to find out if you are in the right school, and the other is your Daddy was sick last wk with stones in his kidneys I think they were moveing along to pass out and of course they made him have a lot of pain. So Thusday he went to Dr Harris, and he gave him a good exam – and found those raised places on his collor bone. (I think I mentioned them to you.) Anyway he wasn't satisfied with them so he sent Dad to a specialist in Richmond, and they put [page 1] him in the Hospital to give him a thourgh going over to see what was what, from what the Dr told me. They should know something by Wed. It might not be anything then again it might, so if you can call Wednesday anytime after 5:15 I'll try to let you know what they have found out if any thing. Don't worry tho because. If any thing does happen we will find a way to get in touch with you. I am makeing out all right you needn't worry about me. Anne has been doing the driving over there.

Helen & James are starting thier vacation Wednesday [page 2] and they will be here by the last of next wk, so we will have plenty of help, and different ones have offered to help, so don't you worry.

I hesitated to write you about this, because I was afraid it might upset you, but then I said to my self it would hurt you more if I didn't let you know, so I hope you will understand what I mean.⁵⁶

Every one else is fine, and Edgar is at camp for his 2 wks training.

We had a nice rain this afternoon as we were coming home from Richmond. It rained so hard we had to pull off the road and stop till it checked up. [page 3] The grass is about to take us. I cut some out front and down at the wood shed. Boy that down at the shed was so rank the

⁵⁶ From what family members and acquaintances have shared through interviews and informal meetings, Ammon wanted to be at home all of the time. His physical being, nor his heart, never wandered far. This time in service is the only time when he was away from Darvills for more than a couple of days. Since his relationship with his parents was close (perhaps more than the other children), he did not like to think there were problems or issues going on without him.

mower kept choking down. Then when I was most through, the gas gave out HaHa, it was getting late so I left that for Monday eve. Don't guess it will take too long.

This is about all I can think of so take it easy and write when you can.

Lovingly

Mama

He is in Richmond Memorial

Oh! by the way Daddy wanted us to bring your T.V. over to the Hospital for him to look at, and we did so maybe that will help pass the time. He isn't in any pain nor he isn't sick at stomach so the time is so long just laying there and sitting up. I told him this eve he can rest some now. But he is getting restless!

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 9, 1965.

[Enclosed are separate letters from his brother Ronald and brother-in-law James.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you tonight? Did you have a nice wk end? Ammon I am sorry I couldn't get your clothes ready to send you over the wk end, but I sure will try to get them for you by the wk end. After I got home from work Sat., about 2 oclock we got a call from Ronald and he was in Richmond at the airport, so we had to go get him, and then we took him on by the [*word cancelled*] Hospital to see Daddy, and when we got home James and Helen had gotten here. Then today Helen and I went back over to see Raymond, and got back about 7 oclock tonight, so you see [page 1] I've been very busy. Daddy seemed about like he was, don't seem to be suffering [too much scratched out] at all.

When we got over there Warren & Garland were there, and Robert Wallace came while we were there. Dr [*they cancelled*] thinks they will operate on Dad maybe Tuesday. Will let you know more as I know.

I wish you could hear Dad tell what they have allready done to him you would have to laugh. His [*first inserted*] roommate was a bird, and he went home this morn. Then they brought in another man, and he is a Methodist preacher, Ha. Can you amagine? Ronald & James are writing to you allso. I'm sure they are fixing you up Ha.

Take care of your self and write and I will keep you posted

Lovingly

Mama

[*This is a delicate and difficult to decipher both in handwriting and in meaning.*]

Hey slicky boy, you think you got you defacation consolidated huh? Well I'll tell you "put" that you don't!

So you are sitting on your butt doing nothing eh slick. Well this just won't do, so I'll just see what I can do for you, like putting you into the infantry and let you hump the hills with full gear and play those war games. How would you like this [*slick underlined three times*]? Don't mouth off [*"put" underlined three times*] if you do you are hunting. I've been driving your car for a while today an boy that thing is sluggish so I guess I'll have to blow it out for you. Oh

insudently I blew out both rear tires and stripped a gear in the transmission, so you had better send me some money to get it fixed. O.K. Slick? I'll give you \$50.00 for the car!

Ronald

[Ammon this is stuff *circled at the bottom*]

We just returned from Mr. Moores pond. Didn't have much luck, only 4_2 to 3 lb bass, 1 pike (31/2 lbs.) and 32 freckle about 3/4 lb. a piece. I'm only kidding. We baby sit while Helen & Mrs. Vaughan went to Richmond.

I just want to tell you our little league team won the Virginia State Championship. We just returned from Norfolk yesterday after beating Newport News in the finals. We now go to Dover, Delaware next week for the District title and if we win there, we play in Norfolk again for the region title and then to Williamsport, Pa. for the world championship. Don't be surprised if we win it all as we have a real team.

Ronnie and I will try to catch a few fish this week but will save a few for you. Mrs. Vaughan will write you of our success. I'm sure you know already.

Take it easy and let us know how you are doing.

James

Envelope handwritten with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US 52616327Co A. 16th Sp BN 4th TNG. BDE. Class PASC-30 Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked August 5, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wednesday night

Dear Mom,

Wish I could have talked to you longer while ago but I couldn't round up enough change. I was glad you said daddy was doing alright so far. Hope they won't find anything else wrong. I'm also glad that if this did happen it happened at a time when you were going to have Helen and them coming so they can help you out. I wish I could be there but that's how it is. I hope nothing else happens right away, I'm sure daddy will get along fine. When I call you Friday night I'm going to call collect and I'll send the money for the calls.

I'm still doing alright, things are going pretty good so far, in the school no trouble at all. You take care of yourself and I'll talk to you Friday night.

Love

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 11, 1965.

Tuesday night

Dear Ammon_

We recieved your letter today. Glad you are finding a little pleasure by going swimming and I don't blame you. I'd go too, as long as its good sport.

James wrote you about the ball games, and the fish aren't biting much. James & Ronald went a while yesterday but didn't have much luck. Today they have been baby sitting today while Helen and I went to Richmond to be there while Daddy recovering from his operation.

We thought we would get there before he went down but they fooled us, they had him back in his room when we got there. But that part didn't matter too much, really what I wanted was to be there when he came back. [page 1] They operated on him for [scratch out] gland trouble. They took out some parts to stop growth, and the Dr said Dad should be fine now, and he should be able to come home in 3 or 4 days.

I'm sorry, I thought I wrote you Dad was in Richmond Memorial Hospital, Richmond Va but by the time you get this if you are planning to send him a card you might as well send it on here, he might be home before you can get to send him one.

Ammon don't you send me any more money to pay for phone calls you might need it. Wait until you get a little ahead then you can send me some to bank for you.

Edgar called tonight and he was upset because they had had a plane crash up where they [page 2] are training, 2 air national Guards were killed. Alltho it did not happen [exactly *inserted*] where Edgar's group were it was part of the Richmond Group and boys [they were *cancelled*] he knew. Well I guess I'd better get to bed.

Oh! I just finished wrapping your clothes and will get them in mailed [the *cancelled*] tomorrow.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked August 12, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wednesday night

Dear Mom,

Glad to hear everyone is doing fine. Also that Daddy is still doing alright. Hope he'll stay that way and keep getting better. You seem to be having a busy time but don't try to get to fast. Just take it easy and don't work so fast.

James, glad to hear the boys won the Virginia state championship, hope they go all the way. Just hope they don't get the tournament jitters and mess up. Hope you'll have been having some luck fishing. I just need to be there and show you'll how it's done.

Ronald, you think you've got it made now don't you, well let me tell you Spec4 you'd better get your consolidated defecation⁵⁷ on down to those NG [*National Guard*] meetings. They're not sticking me in that advanced Infantry stuff, that's for the birds. I don't aim on going to Viet Nam. You never had it as good as I have got it right now. I'll be sitting in some air-conditioned office when I get out of school. You just deposit a neat [page 1 *arrow drawn*] little check for \$450 in my account at the First National and you can have the car. How's that slick.

You'll take it easy and have a good vacation, while I'm down here slaving away, ha. Write more later

⁵⁷ A politer way of saying "getting your shit together" so that Irene would not get upset.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked August 16, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday

Dear Mom,

I am glad to hear daddy went through the operation fine & that everything is going to be alright. I guess he'll be glad to get back home. I won't [send *inserted*] a card or anything to the hospital since he'll be coming home pretty quick. You had written that he was in Richmond Memorial but I thought it would be more of an address [than *inserted*] that.

I appreciate you sending me the clothes, It sure feels good not to have to wear these other clothes all the time. Things are still going pretty good down here. The school is still coming along pretty easy. The swimming pool is also helping out considerable. I had guard duty the other night & have got KP tomorrow but thats all in the game, no trouble.

I guess James & Helen have probably left by now, hope they had a good vacation. Maybe James caught a few fish.

Do you know whether Jackie has pulled any tobacco yet? Also how about [page 1] the other people around there.

Been reading about that mess out in Los Angeles, they ought to stick all them dark people under the jails, there's no sense in that stuff.⁵⁸

Has Ronald decided what he is going to do?

If daddy is already home tell him to take it easy. Write more later.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 17, 1965.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and all of us injoyed it and got a laugh out of it. Allso glad you are getting on well with your schooling, just keep it up.

We brought Dad home Sat evening, and boy was he happy to get home. He really was happy to get here and be home. He is getting on very well. "I'm glad to say," and up and about,

⁵⁸ A reference to the Watts Riot in Los Angeles that lasted six days in 1965. It caused thirty-four deaths and thousands of injuries and arrests. It was the most severe riot in Los Angeles until 1992. Many have attributed the riot to the discrimination blacks received from police, as well as job and housing issues. Looting and vandalism were also effects of this blow up of racial tensions.

he is still weak and I recon he will be so for some time, but the Dr thinks they can treat him from time to time for a while, and he will make it O.K.⁵⁹

Helen and James went up to [page 1] his house yesterday. I think they plan to go back to Vienna Wed or Thursday.

It was real nice to have them here to help out taking me over to see Dad. Helen & Anne took me over there just about every time I went. Helen [would take *cancelled*] took me over there the last wk. and Anne did it the first wk. so we make it fine. Edgar took us over to get Ronald at the airport then on by to see Raymond. Now that he is here, it will help a lot.

You should have heard James tell about the Ball game, he was really up in the air over it.

We had right much company yesterday who came to see Dad [page 2] There was Warren & Family, Garland & Estelle, Bud Cliborne, Jessie & Imogen, Jerry, L.C. & Family, & Fred Tucker, & Josie & Spencer, & Allen Riddle.

He got right many cards, and 3 pots [of flowers *inserted*].

Ronald just got his clothes which he had shipped home, and we enjoyed looking at the different little things he had accumulatted. I think Ray and Charles had a ball. While we were on the back porch tonight, Edgar looked up in top at the corner next to the tin where the berd's allways builds a nest and there was a good size black snake up there. They tried to get him but he went into the boxing and they couldn't get him, so I guess [page 3] maybe we will be sleeping with a black snake one of these nights Ha Ha.

Did you get your clothes we sent? Let me know.

One thing else, is it really dry up here. We sure could use a nice rain.

Write to us when you can.

Lovingly
Mama.

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked August 20, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Thursday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear you'll are kinda getting back to normal, I know you'll are glad to. Daddy, glad to hear you are getting better all the time, just keep it up and take care of yourself. The way mama writes you seem to be coming a celebrity around there and are enjoying it. Just do what the doctors tell you and I'm sure things will get along fine. Don't let that black snake slip in the bed with you one night cause that might create problems.

How did the potatoes turn out & also that corn? You'll come down here and get some of the rain, it rains here about every other day. I'm glad it does to keep things from getting so dusty. It's getting pretty hot down here now, in the upper 90's every day.

Things are still going alright in school, as of now we are half way through. It has sure been a fast four weeks, the next four should go even faster. One of the graduating classes that

⁵⁹ This is not a completely true statement. Why Irene wrote it, we'll never know. It could be she wanted to reassure Ammon and not worry him, knowing it would weigh heavily on him. Then again, the doctors may have given false hopes and she fully expected a recovery. Based on input from those that experienced it, Raymond was sick for quite some time. At some point they must have known that this was not a good sign of things to come.

graduated this week had about ten men that were going to Viet Nam. Isn't that a pleasant thought for the rest of us here. Guess we'll find out in the seventh week when we get our orders.

Looks like we'll be getting a little raise from that military pay raise that is coming out. [page 1 *arrow drawn*] Don't know anything else, guess I'll do a little studying here in this [*word cancelled*] cool air-conditioned library. You'll take it easy.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked August 23, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Dear Mom & Dad,

It was good to see you'll this weekend, it was well worth the trip. We made it back with no trouble at all, it took us about the same amount of time to come back. We were in Columbia at 8:05, stopped & got something to eat and came on in to the post. That ride isn't bad during the day but I wouldn't want to do it at night. You'll seem to be doing fine just keep it up, that is the results of my inspection while I was there, ha. I would have liked to stayed longer but I'm thankful I got to stay that long. It depends on how things work out whether [*word cancelled*] on Labor Day weekend I'll try to make it again [*as inserted*] I told you'll. Don't know much else, figured you'd want to know that we made it back alright. I'll write more during the week.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 26, 1965.

Wednesday night

Dear Ammon_,

Was so glad to get your letter letting me know you got back to Jackson all right.

I was sure glad to see you allso, and Dad was especially glad to see you. Ronald said you all didn't have long to waite, which made it just right I'm glad.

After youall left Jean, Ada, & Jereline came down. Allso one of Raymonds friends from the Turnpike.

Monday night & last night Anne & I picked and froze Butterbeans. Dad helped shell them which helped a lot.

He got Ronald to drive him over on the Pike yesterday and I think he thourghly injoyed seeing all of them. [page 1] Ronald got Edgar to take your [2 of *inserted*] tires up to Eppes Supply and have them recapped yesterday.

As for every thing else they are as usual nothing new. Will try to write more next time. You write when you can. Love from all of us.

Mama

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked August 30, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Good to hear you'll are doing alright, I'm still going along. Things have really been moving here lately. We finished going to the range today, we also qualified yesterday & today. I was shoved out of the expert shot, yesterday evening the sun was so bright you couldn't see half of the targets. Also the lanes I used were in terrible shape. We finished shooting this morning when the sun wasn't out and there is no comparison with the evening firing. Also I didn't fire at all for three days straight because of the weekend and KP Monday. Anyway so much for the excuses I did make high sharpshooter which is just as good. We went to the grenade range this evening and practiced throwing grenades, we also three a live one which was kinda exciting. We're going to the gas chamber tomorrow to get gassed. Sorry that grass in the cemetery didn't live so good and after all that work we did on it. Maybe it will come out some though.⁶⁰ Save some of that squash and things out of the garden [page 1] because if nothing doesn't happen I'll be there in a couple of weeks. I'm glad to hear you're not going to be working overtime anytime soon. Forty hours is enough for you. I thought you were not gong to put a porch back there and was going to use that for a bathroom. Hope you will build it so a bathroom can be put in it later on. I know Junior liked to get into that. Peyton place sounds like it isn't as interesting as it was, maybe it will get better as time goes on. A kinda funny thing happened Sunday morning I went up to the church, anyway I had gotten my time mixed up. I went in as usual, set down and come to find out I was in a Catholic or Jewish service and they were doing all those strange things. I polietly got up and left, I started to stay and see what was going to come off but I didn't. We go out on bivoacu⁶¹ next week so don't know if I'll get to write or not, but I'll get your letter so write if you can.

Love
Ammon

[Second letter enclosed]

Sunday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear you'll are still carrying on, as for me I'm still here. Only three more weeks of this school, time is sure flying. Just got off from KP again. I was slated for guard duty this weekend but they took my name off & put it on KP which thrilled me to know end. I had rather do KP than guard duty.⁶² Glad to hear, daddy, you're getting out more, I'm sure that's a good sign. Sure is nice of Ronald to get the tires recapped since he's paying for it. You'd better take

⁶⁰ Ammon had obviously been trained to work in the cemetery and care for it. This continued throughout his life as he was in charge of it for Sharon Baptist Church. He maintained it every week and made arrangements when burials occurred.

⁶¹ Occasional military exercises and/or maneuvers that took place for days in military encampments out in remote locations.

⁶² Again, this adds to the argument that Ammon was comfortable in the kitchen and enjoyed the tasks associated with culinary arts and care.

me up on the deal I made, it's a chance of a life time. If I find out I'll be stationed close to home week after next you're gonna lose out. Mama you should make Ronald gather them butter beans, that would be a laugh wouldn't? Have you'll heard anything from Jr. & them or when they're coming. Don't know much else, think I'll slip up to the show. Write more later.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 30, 1965.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

How are you today? Everything about as usual?

We are about the same I guess. We took Dad back to that Dr. Friday and he told me the very same thing that the others had told us, and he was one of the Dr's that had tended him while in the Hospital. Alltho I did not know as Raymond couldn't remember the name, he was all confused about the different Drs, untill he saw him Friday. Then he knew him.

I had not seen him before. Dad has another appointment with him the 10th of Sept. What they seem to be doing is keeping close check on him. All they did was run some blood test on him, he seems to be feeling the same as when you were here. He is trying to take on a few light [page 1] jobs, (and they wont hurt him if he feels like it.) it will help him keep his mind busy.

Linda Bishop was married yesterday at Manson Church. I haven't seen any one that went to the wedding.

Ronald hasint gone to work yet. I don't know what he is planning to do. Poor boy he looks like his is completely lost, goes around like he doesn't have a friend in the world. I told him to [scratch out] day that work was the best thing in the world for what ailed him. I don't know he just don't talk. You know how he is, "Say don't mention this when you write, he might not like the idea of us talking about him. The Lord knows [page 2] I don't want to hurt him. It has been good that he was here with Raymond tho. But I do think he should try to do something now."⁶³

Enough of that, I think I will go down to Imogen for a few minutes, as Fred Tucker is up here talking to Raymond allso Robert Wallace, Odie, & Laverne. I went, and Imogen, Doug, Gloria & I gathered some blackeye peas. I brought about ½ bushel home and we just finished shelling them, they turned out real well.⁶⁴ They allso gave me 2 watermelon. I am sure we will enjoy them. We will be thinking of you when we eat them Ha.

Helen called and talked Friday nite James & the Vienna's ball team lost out at the last game, lost to Texas of all states, I was real sorry [page 3] can't think of any thing else.

So be good and write when you can. Every body asked about you today.

Lovingly
Mama

⁶³ Ronald was considered the wild child of the family. He raced cars and was simply mischievous.

⁶⁴ It is common practice when visiting someone in this community at this time of the year to assist in gardening duties, such as shelling beans or harvesting crops.

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked September 3, 1965.

[Written in pencil on Fort Jackson stationary]

Thursday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hope you'll are still living in Darvills cause I'm still living down here. Things are still going alright down here.

I think its good that the doctors didn't have much news cause no news is good news probably. Just keep up the good work.

I had forgotten Linda Bishop was supposed to get married till you wrote she was married. Wonder who it will be next.

I forgot to tell you that last week we had Wacs going to school with us. They weren't actually in our class but another class next door. They took their breaks with us, which made it kinda pleasant week.

I had KP again yesterday, that made 3 times & that should be all. I think everybody gets it 3 times while they're here. The only bad part about it is they get you up at 3:30 in the morning. It has rained all day today and things are kinda wet.

Sure was sorry to hear Jame's team lost. It was a shame for them to go that far and lose out, know James was sorry too.

I don't know yet about coming home this weekend, the boy I ride with is talking about getting his girl to meet him in NC. He doesn't know for sure yet though. It's best that you don't look for me this time. [page 1 *arrow drawn*]

There is going to be a lot of traffic on the road. So don't be disappointed if I don't show up cause it may be the best all around. We take a PT [*physical fitness*] test Saturday morning, I think I'm gonna be a little stiff after that cause it has been a few weeks since the last PT test.

Again don't look for me over the weekend also you'll have a good Labor Day weekend. See you'll later. Write.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked September 7, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well here I am again, we made it back fine. No trouble at all, we took a different route to carry this girl home. She was the girl friend of the boys brother that I rode with. She lived kinda back in the country a little ways out from Raleigh. I'm getting to see a lot of NC & SC by riding with him. We still made it back in about the same time though. I did see something I hadn't seen before the route we took this time, every now & then we would pass a swamp & all up in

the trees was some kind of moss hanging from them. It looked spooky late in the evening like that. We didn't go by the Darlington speedway like I'd hoped, I thought I'd get to see a bit of the race, because you can see part of the track from the road. Don't know much else, glad to get home & see you'll. Write more later.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 10, 1965.

Thursday night
Dear Ammon_,

We received your letter today. I am glad you let us hear from you, and that you all made the trip O.K. and was very glad you were able to get home. It was so nice to have you all home together.

We are about as usual, Daddy has worked for 3 days this wk. As you know Monday was holiday and tomorrow he goes back to the Dr. he seems to be doing pretty good. Alltho he haves to take it easy. I hope every thing is favorable tomorrow.

You spoke of the moss hanging on the trees along the highway. I have seen some of the moss. They have some on some trees at the Azealia Gardens in Norfolk [page 1] it does look different and queer, and I have heard that it is beautiful on down in S.C. I would like to see it. It sure is nice that you do get a chance to see some of the country.

Do you know Roy came over to see Dad Monday afternoon, and you can amagine we laughed some at he and Erma. I was kidding him telling him I sure would like to be at that wedding Sat. and see him standing up in line and some good looking girl come by and give him a kiss, Ha Ha. You know I think he injoyed our carrying on . Ha.

Got a letter from Elsie today to my surprise, she was over Cabells [page 2] Sunday, and they were telling him Raymond had been to the Hospital. Then she wrote me about Hayes Poytress death. You remember them I recon, used to live down as you go to Era.

Oh! One bit of news. I saw Tom Edmonds in Blackstone yesterday at 12 oclock and he told me he had to hurry on home he might have to take Cecelia to Hospital and Bless my boots if that wasn't what happened and the baby was born by 5 oclock. Another boy. Ha.

Ronald was called to work Tuesday at the Telephone Co. I do believe he is finding it might be work, Ha. I'm sure he will make it OK. Just got to get some of the kinks out. Take care of your self and [page 3] write when you can.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked September 20, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary with an enclosure of a Certificate of Training from the Department of the Army for Personnel Administration Specialist Course 16 September 1965]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well how are you'll, fine I hope. As for me I think I'm gonna make it. I'm up here in this other company now. It's the same battalion I took basic in, just up the road. As for my job I will be a company clerk. Typing will be my middle name. A company clerk has a right busy job & long hrs sometimes I'm told. The main thing is those old morning reports, they have to be out everyday. I've got right much to learn about all that stuff. I've got a good first sergeant, he's showing me as things go along. I think I'll like it alright after I've been here a while & catch on to things. I believe I would have liked some other job better though so I could get outdoors more. One good thing they say you get promotions quicker because you're working right with the commanding officers & 1st Sergeant. Also there is a cycle break after each 8 weeks for a couple of weeks when everybody can take it easy. The cycle break just started this weekend, so I came in [page 1 *arrow drawn*] a good time so I can learn some stuff before the next bunch of men come in, & can take it easy some to. I kinda hope I won't have to stay here the rest of my time though. I might get to like it though & won't want to leave, just have to wait & see.

How is Ronald liking it up at the Phone Company so far?

Enclosed is the certificate they gave us at graduation Thursday. You'll continue to take it easy, I'll write more later. Tell Ann to write sometimes, I'd like to hear from them sometimes. Write soon.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 22, 1965.

[Enclosed is a letter from Helen sent to Raymond and Irene that Irene sent for Ammon to read.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and was I glad to get it and to hear the good news. I could have jumped up and down for joy. The Lord sure answered my prayer, and I am thankful. I know you would like to see some of the world, and I would like [for *inserted*] you to see it, but right now I hope you can stay in the states.

So glad you are doing all right, just keep up the good works, and let me know some of what you are doing. Odelle asked me at church today how you were, and she was telling me about these people that were so good [to *inserted*] Carrol when he was down there. [page 1] I can't remember their names, but they were the ones that visited up here after he came home. Maybe after you get a little settled you might meet some nice people.

We are about as usual, doing along very well.

Daddy went up to Blackstone last Sat and picked out a water heater and got the sheet rock to fix the rooms, and we [*word cancelled*] have the insulation so all we need is to get to work, HaHa.

Edgar & Ronald had to go dove hunting a while yesterday. I don't think they had much luck tho.

Ronald has fineally started going out a little. Maybe he was waiting to go to work, he says he likes the job very well. I just hope he completely gets over everything. [page 2] The students around here have fineally gone back to school, and every thing seems about as normal as possible.

Anne & I went up to the orchard this afternoon and got some apples, they are real nice. The Starks delicious. She along with Jane & Susan took the boys to the fair Sat. I told her they were braver than I, but the boys injoyed it. She didn't take Ray tho, Edgar kept him.

I'm starting this tonight and as soon as I hear from you I will finish it and if any thing else happens I will add to it.

We got your letter today. Congratulations so glad for you. Im sure you [page 3] can do it. Just keep up the good works, you know what I told Daddy tonight? I told him (That's my boy!) he had to grin.

Nothing else has happened. Only Anne says tell you just as soon as she gets a chance she will write. I am sending you a letter we got from Helen. I'm sure you will get a laugh out of it. I did.

Write to us again soon as you can.

Lovingly
Mama.

Monday

Dear Folks,

I'll sat down and write this morning while I'm resting from our trip yesterday. Mr. & Mrs. Warden (the people James always goes fishing with) wanted me & James to go fishing yesterday with them. I didn't want to go but they talked me into it, this is just not my line of entertainment. We got this girlfriend of mine to keep Kenny, so we left yesterday morn. about 6:00AM and met them in Arlington. We went in their big white Cadillac drove for an hour & a half down to the bay in Maryland. I thought if I got sick would just fight it and be determine that they wouldn't have to bring me in. Well we got on the big boat and they went for 2 1/2 hours so far out where the fish were and I was getting sicker by the minute because the water was rough and it was a bad day dreary. Thought they were sailing down to Florida some place and I thought to myself if I ever do this again!! With that boat rocking I was sitting in a chair and the water was so rough the chair would tilt over almost with me in it and I just sat and backed myself [page 1] and couldn't move. I never did vomit but was on the verge the whole time. Jeff went too and enjoyed it so much. So they finally gave up about 2PM because they weren't catching anything much. I just sat and couldn't eat and fought the sickness but was so glad to get out of that bay back into the river again where the water was calm. They thought I did pretty good and think next time I would be O.K., but I think it ain't going to be no next time. Last night it felt like the bed was rocking with the waves.

Was glad to hear that Daddy has gone back to work and is doing better. Also glad Ronald has a job, what happened to the one at Camp Pickett.

We have been thinking about having something done to the basement to keep it waterproof and be able to put tile on the floor. We had 3 men to come out and give estimate but we haven't decided what to do yet, but I want to get it done before winter.

We are still hoping for the trip to P.R. James' boss called him the other day and asked him if I was afraid to fly and they [talk *cancelled*] told him no, so he must have us [page 2] in mind. We should hear something this week.

I noticed on your letter that you are still putting our old number. Did I tell you that it had changed to 2327 Stryher Ave?

The Braves baseball teams are still practicing ball every Sat. thru Sept. The banquet and award night is next Thursday night so we hope to go to that.

Was glad to hear that Ann & Edgar went to the beach, but wasn't it cool that weekend it was here. The Monday Labor Day we went down to Manassas to the Sunday School picnic.

Hope you all stay well. We might come the end of this month. Let us hear from you. Love to all,

J.H.J.K. [*James, Helen, Jeff, Kenny*]

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 27, 1965.

[Enclosed are clippings from the *Courier-Record*: "News From Darvills", "Four Lunenburgers Killed in Auto Crash", and a photograph of Phyllis Wallace with her 4th Queen of County Music award.]

Sunday night

Dearest Ammon_,

How are you? Keeping very busy? Hope you are O.K. I know we all get tired, but it is better that we keep busy. I am so thankful for you, and so very proud.

We are all about as well as usual and I'm so thankful that Dad keeps as well as he does. Just hope he continues, he gets tired easier but just so he makes it is all I ask.

He had Daniel to come up and cut the Butterwood Church grass yesterday, and Edgar [& Ronald *inserted*] got the water tank partly hooked up. Enough at least to get the Electric men at Southside Electric to come and hook it up. They said they would, so I'm getting Anne [page 1] to call them tomorrow and tell them its ready to do. May be when you come again we will have hot water Ha Ha.

I just got back from down Edgars, he and Anne went to McKenney Baptist tonight to help sing. Sharon's Choir sand down there tonight. They are having their Revivial this wk. I thought they sang real well this morning at Sharon. Clarence McKissick died Thursday and was buried today at Butterwood. Edgar & I went. I wanted to go so I asked Edgar if he was going. Warren allso went with us. [page 2] I think most every one has finished saving tobacco. Just a little here and there. And from what I have heard, it seems to be selling very well.

Ronald seems to be making out very well. Alltho he seem right tired when he comes in, he hasn't been paid yet. How long is it before they get paid do you remember? Its late and I can't think of any thing else. Write to us every chance you get.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US 52616327 Co A. 16th BN 4th TNG BDE CLASS (PASC. 30) Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked September 29, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear from you so quick, I like to get them letters. I am still doing fine on my job, liking it a little more each day. Worked a little late tonight because we got new men in today & more tomorrow. The morning report is the biggest thing that has to be kept straight. No problems yet though so far. My 1st Sergeant is mighty good about showing me things which has made it that much better. He was on television the other day for about ten minutes and got \$250, how is that for ten minutes talking. He was telling about the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He was a Sergeant of the guard up there for some time. It real interesting to hear him talk about some of his experiences.

That's fine that you'll be getting the water heater hooked up so quick. It sure is going to make a difference having hot water all the time.

Lee & I went into town Sat night & went roller skating, it had been a year or so since I had last been & I was kinda rusty. It didn't take but a little while to catch on though. I didn't fall the first time, I was glad because I had those black britches on. We also went to this big K Mart & looked around, it had everything.⁶⁵ We are going again this weekend cause there is a dance [page 1] at the skating rink and I can dance better than skate. Also you might say there were many girls there to.

Guess what I have made Corporal, stripes and all. The only bad part is I'm not getting corporal pay. It's just acting Cp, they figure I should show some authority when around the trainees I guess.

Show this coin to Edgar & you'll figure out if it's any count or worth anything. It's the first time I had seen one like it.

If you run across Jackie tell him to be kind to his neighbors when selling his bacca.

That's all, write more later. Write.

Love
Ammon

Envelope handwritten and labeled with return address Edgar Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. To Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan USS26163227 Co E 10th (th double underlined) BN 2nd Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 30 1965.

9-29-65

Dear Ammon

⁶⁵ This was probably one of the first, if not the first, time Ammon had ever been to a store of that type and size. McKenney and Blackstone have small mom-and-pop operations, not the big department stores we typically have today.

Well, finally getting around to writing a few lines. Have had good intentions but that seemed to be as far as it would get.

How do you like being chained to a desk? You may enjoy it. At least you will appreciate getting outside when you can, won't you?

Edgar has gone to drill tonight. He and the Col. Aren't seeing eye to eye right now so I always wonder if he will be a Capt. or a Pvt. when he gets home. Things aren't that bad but you never know.

Ammon you should have heard the choir sing at McKenney Church Sunday night. They sounded so good. You know Dorene has done a wonderful job with the Choir.

The R.E.A. [*Rural Electrical Authority*] came down today and hooked up the water heater for your mother. They didn't do it quite like Mr. Vaughan wanted it but they told me they didn't do that work. He wanted a switch box right over the heater. I haven't heard his reactions to it yet. Hope he won't be too disappointed as I tried my best to talk the man into putting a switch in but it just didn't work.

Charles will have company next week. Scott is going to stay with Charles from this Sat. until the next Sunday as Warren and Anne are going to Roanoke or someplace up there [Page 1] to hold a revival. Hope we have all our rain between now and Saturday.

A lot of the boys are really sweating around here now. Lawson Carter's youngest son has been examined, Coles Bishop Jr. has also. Coles told Edgar the other night that the Oct. quota has not been filled yet. You may be seeing some of your friends soon.

Buddy has gone to Nevada to get Aunt Thelma and Uncle Kenneth. He is hoping to get a job with the telephone Co when he returns but it would probably be in Emporia or Lawrenceville. Don't know that he has any definite plans yet.

Charles likes school fine and is doing real well so far. He leaves home at 7:20 and gets home at 4:45 in the afternoon. They have a real long day.⁶⁶

I think Ray has improved a lot. He talks constantly now and makes a lot of sense. He told the electrician today that it was his turn to work with the wires. When the man was putting the wires in the water heater.

Guess Mrs. Vaughan wrote you that Cece Edmonds had her 5th [th underlined twice] child about 3 weeks ago. Jane, Susan, and I took 3 of Cece's, Janes 3 and Charles to the Fair 2 weeks ago. Boy, did we have a merry time. I rode the Merry Mixer with Charles and Chuck. I was so mixed up [Page 2] when we got out I decided that was enough for me. Charles went in the Fun house alone. Every time I looked he had turned around and was coming out of the entrance. Finally after the 3rd [rd underlined twice] try I told him to come on out. Don't think he saw much of it.

Everyone around here is trying to get their tobacco in. Jackie had one crew stripping and one pulling all week. Very few people have finishing pulling.

Heard that Becky Hardy has gotten her a used Falcon, and Nancy got a T.V.

Well it is almost time for Edgar to get home and know you are tired of this scribble.

Take it easy and hope you can get home soon.

Love,
Edgar, Anne and Boys

⁶⁶ This is one of the biggest hurdles to rural education – getting the students there. Even as a high school student, it was a thirty minute car ride to get there (and that was going above the speed limit). This is often mentioned in the context of desegregation of schools and the necessary consolidation as one method of achieving it.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [*underlined twice*] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoA 16th Sp BN 4th Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 4, 1965.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

Your letter sounded so cheerful, I'm sure glad you are adjusting to the business at hand, as well as you are, and especially glad you have such a good Sar-*[Sergeant]*, allso am glad you are trying to get out a little. Its good for you.

I know you are glad you didn't fall with those black pants Ha. You will have to try to get you some more, and how about sweaters? Would you like for me to send you one? Or do you think you might be coming home any time soon?

You didn't say. But what *[did cancelled]* is the boy doing that you rode home with the last couple times? Is he doing something like you?

I'm sure you will be glad when they really give you corporal pay Ha.

Aunt Imogen asked about you this morning at church, said Douglas [page 1] had asked if she had heard me say where you were. I told her you were in Ft. J. "Thank the Lord." Ammon its not that I don't want you to go some other place in U.S. its just that for right now I hope you wont be sent to far away.

The coin you sent home wasn't any thing but a Canadian coin, of no value. Ronald said while he was in Service he was allway getting hold of them, so he would just turn around and pass them off to some one else. He seems to be doing *[word cancelled]* pretty good on the job, said he climbed a pole one day last wk. still hasn't gotten a ck yet.

[They cancelled] Edgar had to go to Hampton yesterday. They *[National Guard]* had to be in a parade.

Then when he got back he came on up here and finished hooking [page 2] up the hot water tank, "So Boy we have hot water now. It might be that when the next bill come's I might wish I had never seen it Ha. And you know he made an expert job of it, not a single leak.

I hope next wk end we can get all the pipes insulated good so no freezing.

Daddy seems about the usual. He had been doing a little work on Garlands *[word cancelled]* Tractor, and seemed right tired at dinner time, so I insisted that he lay down and take a nap. Which is what he did. Now he is out up there fiddling around again. But I think he is about through with it.

For the first 2 or 3 days of the tobacco mkt opening tobacco sold real well. But Thursday the bottom dropped out. Don't know what its doing [page 3] now. I know what they had been selling mostly was sheeting it, you know, not stripping it.⁶⁷ Havint heard any thing else from Helen & James. James must not have won the trip.

Oh! Let me tell you something, Douglas Finch's wife has twin babies, Boy & Girl. I believe they were born last Thursday. I guess that's about all for now. Write when you can

Love from all

Lovingly

Mama

⁶⁷ Sheeting in this context means protecting the crop with plastic covering in the barns to allow it to cure in "sheets." It was also used to mean tying the leaves on sticks in rows that were hung in barns.

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US52616327 CoE, 10th Bn, 2nd Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked October 9, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Friday

Dear Mom, Dad

You'll sure did surprise me with that cake, I just wasn't thinking about something like that, I was looking for a letter. That was a fine cake about the best I've tasted in a good while. Appreciate you'll sending it to me, I gave a couple of slices to the three men staying here in the same little house I'm in. They also said it was about the best they had tasted in a good while. Glad to get the Courier to read, I cut that picture of Ray & Charles out and put it in my pocketbook, it sure did look exactly like them.

Things are still going pretty good for me, got it pretty well made for 5 or 6 weeks, got most everything typed up for the trainees. They 1st Sergeant took off today & this weekend sorta left me in charge but everything is going fine so far. It will probably be a couple of weeks before I get to come home. Lee went home this weekend to get his car and bring back.⁶⁸

We got flu shots yesterday, maybe you ought to check and see if you & daddy can get them if they don't cost too much. Might be a good thing in the long run. [page 1]

The weather down here was almost cold the first part of the week, I'm sure it was up there too. I'm gonna get my room painted and fixed up next week, I'll say one thing the 1st Sergeant is looking out for me which is fine. Miss going bowling tonight with Lee not here, not much fun going by ones' self. Don't know much else. Write.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 16th Sp BN 2nd Tng Bde Class (PASC 30) Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 11, 1965.

[Enclosed is a letter from his sister Helen to Raymond and Irene.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you making out? And how are you and your work? Quite busy I am sure. Have you by chance seen Ronnie Gooch? He is at Ft Jackson, taking Basic, went down over a wk ago. I guess you might be seeing right many from Va [underlined twice] from now on. Some maybe for NG's [*National Guard*].

Oh! I sent you a cake last Wednesday, did you get it? I hope you did and hope it was allright.

I went with Dad to Richmond Friday., and Dr was real pleased with his progress, said he did not feel any bumps this time. But he still will have to keep tab on him to see if they might

⁶⁸ Lee is one of his closest friends in the military, but no one seems to know his full name. The Fort Jackson yearbook did not list a "Lee" or anything close, so this must be a middle name or a nickname.

come back, or if he has any thing to happen. And if he has any pain to amt to any thing to come right away, and for him not to [page 1] lift or strain at any thing too hard. So it seems like it will be partly up to Dad as to how well he gets on, to an extent.

Bob Wallace's brother that lives in Richmond died last night. I tried to call down there tonight but didn't get an answer, and Cliff Wallace has been in the Hospital with ulcers (like Edgar had) but was supposed to go home today.

I don't know why I am writing you all this stuff, but I thought you would like to know.

I just talked to Imogen and she was interrupted by Doug – he wanted to know how you were feeling and how you were doing. I told him you were taking in the sights HaHa. I bet he laughed.

Ronald got his first ck Friday and he gave me \$20.00 and [page 2] Dad \$10.00 and I guess it about took the rest to get caught up on bills. I don't know for sure but I don't believe he is planning to buy your car. After being so long getting to work, and all. We will just wait and see. (Don't mention the car when you write to me. I don't want him to think I'm meddling)

Roy and Christine were over to see us this afternoon. I was real glad to see them.

Yesterday Raymond[,] Ronald[,] and I wrapped the water pipes with insulation and covered the ditch or rather filled the ditch good with dirt and got it winterized Ha Ha. I sure hope they don't freeze this winter. I thought it would be a lot better if we did it before it turned so cold. Edgar finished the wiring in the little hall & room for Bath, while we were insulating, so you [page 3] see we are not setting down Ha Ha. Guess I'd better stop, hope I havint sounded to morbid Ha. Write and let us hear from you. Will try to be better next time

Lovingly

Mama

Tuesday Evening

Dear Folks,

Was glad to hear that youall are doing well. Also glad to hear that Ammon will stay in S.C.

You asked about the contest, well we didn't win we would have said something by now if we had. Although James had every point to win, no one did. The boss said no one deserved to win which is a lie! James will tell you all about it when we come.

You hadn't told us about your water heater mighty glad to hear about it.

We had a contractor to come Tuesday and fix us a cement walk out front and pour new cement on the porch and extend it on out to the other end of the house. It looks real nice and it should help keep some of the water away from the basement. Now we will have to get a load of dirt to fill in around the house.

I fixed me a bed out in yard and planted some tulips & hyacinth bulbs. Had wanted to do this for a long time.

Kenny continues to like school. He took a pumpkin to school today from our garden [page 1] Jeff is fine also.

We are having revival services at our church this week. We went Monday & Wednesday nights and I have to stay in the nursery tomorrow night. James won't be able to go because he will have to work late.

It has been raining real hard all day today, I'm glad the cement had a couple days to dry out.

There isn't to much to write we have just been doing the usual routine things.

Let us hear from you.

Oh! James went fishing again Sunday before last but I didn't go. They caught right many.

Love to all,
J.H.J.K.

Envelope handwritten and labeled with return address Edgar Vaughan Rt 3, Box 144 Blackstone Va. To Pvt. Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Co. E 10th Bn 2nd Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 12, 1965.

10/10/65

Dear Ammon:

Will try to write a few lines while every thing is reasonably quiet. The boys are in bed and Edgar has gone to choir practice.

Warren and Anne got back late last night but they didn't pick up Scott until this morning. Then tonight they called and said they were sick and couldn't have Bible Study, so I went down there. Ann and Warren both have the flu. I could tell that they felt rough.

Edgar took us to see the new Hunt Club House this afternoon. They have gotten the cinder block above the windows so far. It is on Thurman Gibbs' Place. A good way from the road. It is suppoee [supposed] to have 3 rooms. Kitchen, front room, and a bed room for those who wanted to spend the night.

Jackie, Jean and Jack Wainwright have gone to Connecticut to see Joanne. She is teaching there this year. Do hope they have a nice trip as Jean needed to get away a few days.
[Page 1]

Edgar said he wanted to try your Magnum out this season. I told him he better stick to what he already has as that has been pretty lucky for him.

Tuesday Morning

Didn't have a chance to finish this as was so busy yesterday so will try today. Mrs. Vaughan said last night that she had heard from you and that you had received the cake. Surprised you didn't it?

I am planning to go to Lynchburg tomorrow to see Claude. Certainly hope it will be a pretty day.

Well don't know anymore news so will close for now and get to work.

Take it easy and don't have too good a time in Uncle Sam's Army.

Love,
Edgar, Anne and Boys

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 25, 1965.

Sunday night,

Dear Ammon_,

How are you makeing it? Working hard? And having fun when you get a chance? I hope so. How about the new boys coming in? Have you come across any one from up here? I heard that a Tompkins boy from Blackstone is down there. He is Howard Tompkins son. I know you have heard Daddy & I [*word cancelled*] speak of him. If things keep up there might be as many home town boys down there as it is up here.

Who do you think came today? Annie, Elsie, & Samuel. I was so surprised to see them, alltho real glad. We were in the kitchen when they walked [page1] in, they were all well.

Ammon I recon you wondered what in the world was wrong that I hadn't written, when you didn't hear from me. Anne just called, wanted Ronald to take her on up to pick up the car. In the morn. she had to take Ray for his regular Dr visit. She says tell you you must be having fun since she hasn't heard from you Ha.

Daddy had Daniel and two more colored boys to come up and shuck the little corn, so we are glad that's done before it gets too cold. And Thomas Cousins came and allmost finished the bathroom (the carpenterey part) little by little we will get it done, alltho it does seem mighty slow. [page 2] You know that stuff I wrote you about Douglas Finchs wife having twins was one of those tales that gets out. I [*word cancelled*] thought it was true but it wasn't. But this is true now, she did have a baby boy, and the poor little fellow has a injured brain of some kind. I heard Warren say in the pulpit this morning that the little fellow was in a coma. I shouldn't say it I don't recon but if the Lords is willing and see's fit it would be a blessing if he takes him on.⁶⁹

I don't get to see Jackie much only at a distance, he was down here yesterday, his pigs were out down here and they were trying to get them. I don't know [page 3] how his tobacco is selling.

I don't think tobacco is selling too good. I heard several say, its not, right discouraging, can't think of any thing else right now to write. Let us hear form you.

Lovingly
Mama.

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon Vaughan US52616327 CoE, 10th Bn, 2nd Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked October 18 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear you'll are still making out fine, as for me things are going fine right now. Glad to hear that report on Daddy, he had better take it easy & not get to rank or we'll have to tie him down, ha.

I was glad to get the Courier Record, and see the news. That sure was bad about the Farley boy.

⁶⁹ After witnessing the difficulties placed on her son Edgar having two sons with special needs, perhaps this is Irene's way of showing empathy for the other family. She knew exactly what a family endures when going through having a child(ren) with physical and mental deficiencies.

The letter you wrote before this last one got misplaced somewhere and I got it with this last one. So I'll answer both of them this time. Don't send any clothes I'll get some when I come home. The boy that I ride with does the same thing I do, he is a company clerk to.

So Ronald is climbing some & getting paid to, I like to be there & laugh when he cuts out & skins one of those old square poles.

That was a lot of junk about the contest, no reason why James shouldn't have won it. Might have been a fake contest anyway just to get somebody to work harder. Like to hear what James had to say about it. I had forgotten Kenny was going to school, I can just see him now sitting in a classroom.

So you've got hot water rolling, like you say it'll probably make a difference in the bill [page 1 *arrow drawn*] it's probably worth it.

The 1st Sgt showed me some pictures he had taken while he was part of the Honor Guard of the Unknown Soldiers Tomb, they were really something. He is a right sharp soldier in the pictures. Most of them showed him taking wreaths of flowers from heads of state and placing it at the Tomb. He even had one with Kruschew in it.

I wrote a letter to Douglas & Gloria the other day. If Douglas Finch has any more children I don't know where he'll put them.

Lee & I went out the other night with a couple of girls from a college here in Columbia. There's is nothing I like to hear more than a sweet little old southern drawl talking girl, ha.

Got my room painted yesterday looks a whole lot better. Painted it a kinda dark blue.

Don't know much else, write more later. You'll take it easy and write.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 18, 1965.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon

How are you doing tonight? We are as usual. It has been nice and warm yesterday and today, but its turning cool again tonight. I guess when it gets cool this time it will finish killing all the vegetation. Just think here it is getting on in to the last of October.

I missed you this morning helping me get the communion service ready for church this morn- I had to do it by my self except Wayne came on over and did a little toward taking the bread on out and setting it on the table.⁷⁰ About the usual crowd there. The Gammon girl sang [page 1] a special, which was right good.

How are you and going to Church? Do you have a church close by? I went down to see Uncle Jessie this afternoon. He seemed to be getting [on *inserted*] very well, alltho Dr says he will have to stay in a few more days. Randolph & Louise were there. Aunt Imogen said Doug had gotten a letter from you.

Our home coming supper for Sharon will be the Sat night after Thanksgiving, which makes it later than last yr.

⁷⁰ This was another area that Ammon helped his mother with, going against traditional gender roles. It is interesting to note, however, that he continued to perform this duty right up until his death.

And they are taking envitory at Levi's the last Friday in this month. [*word cancelled*] Therefore [page 2] we will have a long wkend off. I can sure use the day at home, maybe by then we will have some more done on the rooms for bath & hall. Seems like we can't get much done at the time.

I don't know if Anne wrote you. But the men around here are fixing a clubhouse up over at Gibbs Store. I thought you would be interested Edgar went over and worked on the roof a while yesterday (for the hunters).⁷¹ When I got from work yesterday at 12oclock, [*the cancelled*] and stoped at the store to get some bread, Mrs Hoover had just been called on the telephone, from dialing for dollars, and she didn't even have the T.V. on Ha. Ha. [page 3] She almost had a heart attack, she had a chance at \$110.00 (I recon I would have too).

Did you get your [Blackstone *inserted*] Courior? You will be getting it from now on. I thought you would injoy it and it will keep you up to date on what is going on around here better than I can write. Have you gotten your room painted yet? I am sure it will be nice to have a little privacy.

Can't think of any thing else right now.

Write to us whenever you can and take care of your self.

Lovingly

Mama

Envelope with return address of Pvt Ammon C Vaughan US52616327 CoE, 10th Bn, 2nd Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked October 25, 1965.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad everyone is fine up there, things are still fine down here. You hadn't said anything about Uncle Jesse being sick, but glad he's doing alright. Certainly glad you fixed it so I'd get the Courier every week, so I can keep up with what is going on up there. See where Odie C stepped out and got his name in the paper. We went out to the Fair last night, it was pretty good. I don't think it was quite as good as the one at Petersburg though. Never thought I'd be going to a Fair at S.C., kinda funny. Anne wrote me that they were fixing a clubhouse at Gibbs. Glad they are, need it. I can just see Mrs. Hoover now she probably tells everybody she was called by dialing for dollars. The supply clerk here in my company killed a deer yesterday, he is really proud of it too. Killed it with one shot from a rifle. The church I go to is about 100 yards from where I stay, go every chance I can. One of the cooks here gave me one of his portable radios to use. I take [*word cancelled*] up right much time with him. He's fixing to retire pretty soon.

[page 1]

Glad he let me use it to listen to, I look at his TV too. Think I'll hafta get me another pen this one writes to messy. Don't know much else, might come home this weekend depends on whether Lee can get off. I want to come Friday evening so we can have more time. Let you know if we do. You'll take care.

⁷¹ This is one of the first examples in the area of a formal, organized hunt club. A social gathering for men, this was a way for them to conduct activities during the various hunting seasons of the year. The current club is located close to this original location and continues to thrive despite changes in the cultural climate. Even those individuals who have moved away often return during November and December for deer hunting season.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked November 1, 1965.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter yesterday, was very sorry you weren't able to get home for the wkend, but I understand we don't always get to do what we would like to.

You seem to sound like you are finding a way to pass the time Ha. I am allso very glad you are makeing some friends, it will mean a lot to you I know. I think its very nice of the man to lend you his radio to listen to. That will help pass the time allso.

So you and Lee will have to start all over again finding a girlfriend Ha Ha. That shouldn't be too hard. We are all very well except Dad took [page 1] a cold last wk and its slowing him down a little. Went to see Dr Harris yesterday and got some medecine I hope it will knock it out, but it seems like the colds we are getting these days are sort of stubbon. I think he will be O.K. if he will do like he should. Dr Harris was real pleased at his progress, he stayed in the office so long that I went in to see what was going on, and Harris and Dad were setting back having a time laughing and talking Ha Ha. (I went with him up there) I allso got Dad to ride with me on to Crewe to find where Dr Couch had moved his office. The filling dropped out of 2 of my teeth last wk, so I've got to see about them, he will take me the 13th.

You said we [probaby *cancelled*] probably [page 2] didn't get any corn much. You are mistaken it did very well, at least the part up near the road did. He got about a load and a half.

Some sad news now, Mamie died yesterday morning. She had been in the Hospital about a wk. and didn't seem any worse Friday night, so Anne said. And Mrs Hoover talked to her Friday night on the telephone. And she did tell her that she had bad pains in her chest. The Dr's told Anne & Ireen that her blood veins to her heart had closed completely with calcium. She will be buried tomorrow at Sharon.

I've had a very busy day went to church this morn then came home and cooked something to send down to Jack Loftis as the [page 3] family are gathering down there. Then got ready and went down and got Aunt Imogen and went up to the funeral home to see Mamie, then came back home and cooked 3 pies for the Ruritan supper tomorrow night, so I'm ready to hit the deck.

Uncle Jesse seems to be getting some better. Dr is letting him walk out side some now. Douglas is sick with that nose trouble he has. Imogen says he seems to feel right bad. Nothing else right now to write.

Take it easy and take care of your self and write.

Lovingly
Mama

P.S. Mrs Moore was over yesterday and asked about you, says she will get around to writing soon she hoped

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked November 22, 1965.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and its all ways a happy time when I get your letters out of the mail box. I know I ought to do better my self but it just seems like I don't have enough time to get around, any way I think about you. Then too I thought maybe the Courier would fill in where I couldn't. So very glad you are doing along as well as you are, and having a little fun.

I can amagine how much you laughed at Lee, but as you say you might just have the same thing to happen to you, especially with those old britches Ha Ha. Or have you bought your self some new ones? I am sure it is fun tho, so keep it up. Some clean wholesome fun is good for you. [page 1] We are all about as usual. Our only problem has been water. But we have gotten the Gentrys to come and have started to drilling [on a well *inserted*]. They drilled Friday and went down about 36 ft. and we have about 18 ft of water in it as of today. They left Friday eve before anyone had a chance to talk to them, so we don't know just yet if they are going deeper or not, or just what, anyway I will be a happy soul if they don't have to go so deep. We had them to put it just a little way on the side of the wellhouse going toward the wood shed.

I don't think the hunters have been too lucky as of yet, alltho Odie & Edgar said they heard of two big Bucks being killed Sat. Both of them went hunting but no luck. Allso Ronald for a little while. So I hope you get a chance at one, when you [page 2] come. Daddy is planning to take off from Tuesday all next wk. The days that he has coming to him which he will lose if he doesnot take off.

And I think James and Helen are planning to come home Thanksgiving. "James to do some hunting". Ha. Can't think of anything else right now. Write when you can and hope it will be so you can come and if you can't I will understand, and will be thinking of you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 2, 1965.

Wednesday night

Dear Ammon_,

It was so nice to have you home for Thanksgiving wk end, and I allso appriciate you letting me know how every thing was on your way back to camp. It allways puts my mind at ease when I know the trip back was O.K.

I'm sure it must be sort of nice not to have to get up so early in the morn once in a while.

I guess it wont be long untill the other cycle will come in, I just heard on T.V. that [page 1] they are reducing the Draft Call for Dec some. I guess some of the boys will be glad to hear that.

[word cancelled] You Know! Edgar and Anne have both been sick with that old stuff that Ray had upchucking and trotting,⁷² but are better now. Ronald allso has a very bad cold, but it does seem better.

Daddy went Monday and had those places on side his ears worked on. I guess they will be better in a few days.

As we were starting to eat tonight the telephone rang, and it [page 2] was Jr. He called to tell Ronald where he could get a real good 65 Pontiac real reasonable and he said he [can cancelled] knew the fellow who owned it, but of course, he was too late letting him know. He said they were all well except for colds, and Muriel has gone to work.

Oh! let me tell you something, Anne told me tonight that Edgars [NC cancelled] N.G. Company will get to shoot the Sulute for the Governor when he takes office after xmas. Now don't you know he is proud? I am glad [page 3] for him and hope his men does it real well. Guess I'd better get to bed. Be good and write to us when you can.

Loveingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 13, 1965.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_

We just recieved your letter and glad you are going ahead trying to be comfortable. Boy it sounds like you should be right cozy, and I hope you are.

You aren't by yourself with colds, it seems like Daddy and Ronald can't get over thier colds to save thier lives, soon as they get a little better they catch more, and yesterday and today has been so hot. I know we will hear of more colds. I really wish we could have some rain to wash the air out, its so [page 1] dry.

Did I write you that Daddy had some more of those places on side his ears and temples burned off? They seem to be doing all right. Allmost well.

Jean E. called me this afternoon to get your address, said she was going to send you some cookies (you might watch out for them.)

Douglas was examined last wk. But don't know any thing yet. Alltho they kept him over there 2 days, seems like they found his heart beat too fast, so they kept him longer trying to find out for sure. Doug still don't know what the verdict is. Guess he will find out later. [page 2]

Helen seems so much better she wrote to us, wanting to know about Christmas, and one thing and another. I think they plan to come along about 28th or something like that and spend the rest of the Christmas.

And Jr & Family plan to come the first part of Christmas.

I did a little Christmas shopping yesterday. I hope I can get it all done before the very last minute.

As soon as you know for sure when you will get to come home let me know, because if it will be too late in the xmas I want to send you something by mail.

Edgar had drill today. I guess getting ready for the [page 3] Parade for the Governor Ha! Ha.

⁷² Reference to vomiting and having diarrhea.

Well we fineally had the note burning cermony at church this morning. And I know there were many who breathed a breath of relief. It was very impressive.⁷³

I forgot when telling about Douglas that they say 26 boys left McKenney that morning, and out of the 26-24 passed the examination. They must be pushing them through.

Write when you can,

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 20, 1965.

Sunday night

Dear Ammnon_,

We recieved your letter and I was so very sorry that I had failed to write you or that my letter failed to reach you. I know how bad it is to expect a letter and for some reason fail to get it. You know I sure intend to write at least once a wk if not more.

We are doing as well as usual now. Alltho Dad & Ronald both had colds, and Dad did have to be off from work 2 or 3 [page 1] days, then he sort of got over it then he had a reaction from the medecine and broke out in a rash, and had to go back to Dr. for something for that, but I think he will be all right now. It seems to be going away. So all and all I hope everything will be normal by xmas, and really it wasn't too bad.

I just came back from down church where we were practicing for program for xmas. They are having it Wed. night I think it will be pretty good.

Did you get the cookies Jean [page 2] sent?

Ammon I sent your gift yesterday and I hope you get it O.K. I had it insured.

And I went yesterday morn. and just about finished my shopping for xmas, and we get off Thursday at 12: oclock and go back to work the 3rd of Jan.

Ronald [got *inserted*] us a tree for xmas yesterday. We havint gotten it decorated yet. Its real pretty.

Not much else to write about. So take it easy and let us hear from you, and I hope you get to come home before the Holiday is completely over. [over *written in bottom right corner* – page 3] If there is any altering to do on your pants bring them on home when you come and I will do it for you.

Loveingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va[underlined twice] to Pvt Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE 10th BN 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 27, 1965.

Monday Morn.

⁷³ This is a common activity for local churches. When they have paid off the mortgage on the property or building, the congregation has a special service to commemorate and celebrate its completion. We had one when I was a teenager for our "New Building," which is actually a center with restrooms, offices, and a kitchen devoted to church related gatherings and activities.

Dear Ammon,

How are you now? Was so glad you called Sat night as I had wanted to call you. We are still O.K. sort of quite with no one here but me, it doesn't seem right, but I'm sure I can find enough to keep me busy. In fact I just called Aunt Imogen and had a nice long chat with her? You know what? They have put in a heating system. I am real glad, with Uncle Jessie's health like it is and Imogen having [page 1] so much to do.

Jr and Muriel came and spent the day yesterday couldn't stay any longer, as Muriel had to get back to work. She is working now. They seemed to be fine. They brought us one of those small cabinets with mirror on the door for the bath room, which was nice, if we keep on we will get everything after while. Alltho I don't think we will try to do any thing else till spring.

Annes Company came and they stoped by here last night. They looked real well. [page 2] Nothing much new to write and as hope to see you Friday or Sat will wait and talk.

Oh! I forgot just after we hung up from talking the Telephone rang and it was Helen. They were up at Mrs. W. and will be here tomorrow night and stay the rest of the wk. James will go on back to Vienna and work til Friday night then come back down for Helen & the boys.

See you soon

Loveingly

Mama

LETTERS: 1966 SERIES

[No envelope]

Dear Ammon

Here is your Policy I hope every thing is in shape. But I hope you can sell your car. It will help you if you can get rid of it down there. Sales are so slow up here. Whenever you want the title let us know. I just came from up at the store. Patsy said her boyfriend was due at Ft Jackson the first of April or there about. So [whatch *cancelled*] watch out for him and make him welcome ha.

Edgar and some of the others are busy trying to get the Parsonage painted on the inside, getting ready for the new preacher. He will be coming in the first of April. [page 1] Daddy had to shoe his car all around, So by by \$'s⁷⁴ I drove the car to work 2 or 3 days last wk as are of the Employees weren't working. Now they have cut us all back to 4 days a wk, don't know for how long. (I got off the track as usual) any way one day I had the car parked out beside the building and one of the girls came back and asked me if I know I had a flat tire? and I called Edgar and he came & changed it for me. So Daddy couldn't stand that Ha.

I have to go back to Dr Thurs. to have the stitches taken out of my gums. They have gotten on real well, my [fach *cancelled*] face is allmost normal, you can't hardly tell its swollen any.

If there is any thing else I can do let me know.

Lovingly

Mama

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan CoE, 10th BC, 2dTngBde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked January 13, 1966.

⁷⁴ The vernacular here may be confusing. It simply means to get new tires for the car. In this case, all four.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well I'm back again, we made it back with no trouble at all. We stopped off at Lees' folks for a couple of hours, he hadn't seen his brother for 18 months, he just got back from Germany. Well I got another surprise when I got back, I'm having to move again. They have made me Battalion clerk, which I don't know yet whether it's good or bad. I'm going to [scratch out] like the hrs I think, no pulling CQ⁷⁵ and it's not half the work of being a company clerk it's just a little different. I'm sure it will be fine after I catch on to things. I'm pretty sure Lee had to move to another company, haven't seen him today. My 1st Sgt sure hated to see me go, I'm sure he'll make it fine though. He came down to Battalion about four times today talking to me. My other first Sgt is just across the road. Seems like I got mighty popular while I was on leave. I enjoyed being home seems like it went by mighty fast. Didn't get to do everything I had planned but hunting. If anyone asks why I didn't come to see them tell them I was aiming to. Can't think of much else write more later.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan CoD, 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia postmarked January 17, 1966.

[written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Sunday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well how are things up there, white probably, we got rain for the last two days. It was a cold rain, probably close to 2 inches. I haven't seen the forecast yet but they said it snowed in N.C. so am sure you'll got some. I like what I'm doing fine so far, it is quite a change because it is not half the work. Watched the Harlem Globetrotters on TV this evening, the pictures comes in clear as a bell on my TV so far. Nothing much has happened since I last wrote. I talked to the woman that Carroll had given me the address. She called up to the company & wanted to know something about a trainee. I recognized the name when she said it. We talked a couple of minutes, she told me to come out and see them. Lee & I are going out to see them soon. She said she had gotten a Christmas card from Carroll. All I can think of. Notice address change.

Love
Ammon

Envelope with return address From Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a underlined twice] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE. 10th BN. 2nd TNG Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked January 17, 1966.

Sunday afternoon

⁷⁵ Means "Charge of Quarters" and basically performs any tasks that the commanding officer delegates. It usually lasts for twenty-four hour shifts and rotates.

Dear Ammon_,

Was so glad you could be home. Just seemed like I didn't get to really see you much. But I was glad you could hunt some even if you didn't get to kill a deer. Better luck next time.

I'm really happy to hear you are stepping up. "That's my boy!" Make good at every thing you can. Guess you have heard by now what Lee is doing, hope you and he can keep in touch.

Aunt Imogen talked to me this afternoon. She said she missed you not coming down to see them. I told her what you said, and she said Doug. Kept talking about it, she said he planned [page 1] to come see you, but you were gone some place or was going so he didn't get to be with you only at church. By the time you get to come again maybe it will be pretty weather and you will have more time to visit.

Did you all have any snow yesterday and last night? It started down [on up *inserted*] here about 2 oclock or little after, and snowed most of the night off and on, so we have a real nice snow, at least 4 inches in the shallow spots, and up to 10 or more inches in drifts. I'm glad the wind isnt blowing and hope it don't get up, or it will be really cold. it cleared up this morning but looks [page 2] like its fixing to cloud back up. I wonder if its fixing to snow some more, looks sort of like it.

Edgar had to go to Richmond yesterday as you know to be in the parade. He said he reconed every thing went off OK ha Ha! and coming back down below McKenny near Gene Russell's house a big old truck side swiped him. Didn't hurt him tho, but did about \$75.00 or a hundred dollars worth of damage to Edgars car. And the man didn't even know he struck Edgar, but he went on up the road a ways and had an accident or they might have had a little trouble getting him, But they got him. So I hope it wont cost Edgar any thing to get it fixed, but it was [page 3] snowing so bad and roads slick so I guess he might not could help it.

Daddy was called out to work this morning about a quarter to three. He said he made it fine tho. Got home today about 1:30.

Ronald decided to go to Johnson City yesterday and asked me if I wanted to go, but I felt a little afraid of going off up there this time of year, and boy am I glad I didn't go. I'd be a nervious wreck by now if I had. Then to I had to work yesterday morn and was to get my glasses yesterday afternoon, so I got them and [*word cancelled*] hiked it on home, and was glad I did. [page 4] Got a letter from Helen. They were doing very well. Jeff had been sick with strep throat.

Recon you saw in the paper about Mrs Condroys death. You know she was Mrs Colemans [*word cancelled*] mother.

Dad and I appreciate our gift from you a lot. I was in Peebles store yesterday and I came across some white table cloth Damask and it was what I had been trying to find for some time, and I needed one. Both my old ones were getting on the blimp.⁷⁶ So I used the money you gave me and got me one, so thats your gift to me, and thanks a lot. Cant think of any thing else [page 5] right now.

Write and let us hear how you are likeing your new place.

Lovingly

Mama

⁷⁶ A reference to wearing down after long or frequent use.

Envelope with return address From Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a underlined twice]
to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 CoE. 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C.
29207 postmarked January 24, 1966.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and injoyed it so much. Its so interesting to know and hear about your new experences. I guess you wonder some times what next too don't you?

You didn't say what Lee is doing. I hope he got a good deal allso.

So you fineally heard from Carrols friend? Odelle had asked me if you had contacted them. I hope you [and Lee *inserted*] can get out to see them, maybe you can meet some more people.

Boy that snow stayed on the ground all the wk. then yesterday it started snowing again then it started to hail then turned to rain. [page 1] So to day it allmost gone. The rain melted it a lot. Then too today its is real windy, if it keeps up by tomorrow it will be practially gone. I heard on the news that they had about 16 inches in some sections of Tennessee, by last night, did youall get any snow?

Ammon, Mr Moore is in Johnston Willis Hopsital in Richmond. He had a heart attack day before yesterday, which was Friday, and is on the critical list. Nurses around the clock. So if you can get to it, hope you can send him a card. He allways seemed to think a lot of you.

I don't know if it was mentioned while you were home about [page 2] Jackie and Jean were on the verge of moving from up to Mary's. Well the moved yesterday, moved down on Baskervills place, [*word cancelled*] near the river. I was hoping they could work things out so they wouldn't [think they *inserted*] had to move. But you know the old saying, no house is large enough for 2 familys.

Ronald made his trip to Johnson City just fine no trouble at all.

Edgar had to drill today. Poor thing every time he turns around its something.

Well Ammon, Jean finially lost [page 3] "Brownie" thier dog. Friday, I have entended talking to them but no answer, so I guess they must be gone some where. Can't think of any thing else right now, so you take it easy and write me all the news.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*]
to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq. 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C.
29207 postmarked February 1, 1966.

Monday noon

Dear Ammon_,

How are you? Hope youall didn't have all this snow like we did. (Before I get into that.) We are all very well. Daddy wasn't feeling too well over the wk end. I think may be he shoveled too much snow last wk. and sort of upset his back. He seems to be doing very well now.

Now for the snow. I guess you saw on T.V. about it. We are having a time. We had just got over the other snow, rather there were still patches of snow on the ground. Tuesday night it

snowed some and Wed. we went to work, it was still snowing [page 1] a little. Then by 12oclock it had gotten bad, and we came home then didn't wk Thursday. It stoped snowing Wed. night with about 12 inches snow on the ground, so Friday we worked and Sat went to work and worked 5 hrs. When it starting snowing again, and ran us home. It snowed from then on till long about 9 oclock Sunday morning, with an additional 4 inches. And its the finest dry snow I ever saw. With the winds blowing you can imagine how it has drifted. I wished for a Kodak so I could let you see some pictures of how it looks. Ronald has his car parked out [page 2] here by the cinder blocks and snow is up to the glasses on the door of his car. Ha Ha. We have had to shovel and shovel and the wind drifts the snow right back. Hope you all didn't have it like that.

Guess you saw in the paper about Doc' Cliborne death, and they had to bury him in all that snow coming down. His death was somewhat of a surprise to me, alltho I knew he had been real ill. I think it must have come quicker than had been expected. Mr Moore is still ill in the hospital. [page 3] None of us didn't go to work this morning but Edgar. Then Ronald went up there with Odie to get some tires for Odies truck, when Ronalds boss man saw him and nabbed him Ha. But our car's are all stuck out here in the snow, so we will have to wait until can get them out. I guess we will have to go in to work with Edgar in the morning. The Highway is clear.

I talked to James [& Helen *inserted*] yesterday and they had more snow than we did. James said you couldn't hardly see his car. Temperature down to 7% last night. I think its about 25 right now. [page 4] So far our water hasn't frozen up. At least the cold water isn't but the hot is.

And a big potion of my flowers froze last night. I sure hate that.

Oh! before I forget. The telephone Co. called Spencer to come up for a test [last *inserted*] Sat. I haven't heard if he passed it or not. Can't think of any thing else right now. Write us all the news, and what you are doing. Every ones ask's about you, especially down at [Dock *cancelled*] Doc's house last wk.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 7, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter and sure injoy hearing from you, and glad you were at least well. We are all as usual. Still snowey & cold. The days seem to warm up a little in the middle of the day, and the snow seems to be melting some, but there is so much on the ground you can't seem to miss it so much. I guess you saw by the pictures in the Courior some what how it was. We are able to get out from the house with the cars now. Ronald was able to move his car yesterday. He stayed in Blackstone, with Lawrence Ward from Monday untill [page 1] Thursday night.

I went back to work last Tue - rode with Edgar 2 days. Daddy went back to work Wednesday.

We had preaching this morn for the first time in 2 Sundays. If it keeps like this maybe we will learn to cope with snow HaHa

You asked about Mr Moore. He seems to be coming out of that spell, as bad off as he was. And Audrey said he was tickled pink to get your card. The whole family seemed to appreciate the fact that you took time to send him a card. I knew they would.

And as for Brownie he died of age and some sort of disease. He didn't get in the road. [page 2] The dog that Edgar had died this morning. I think if I were he, I wouldn't try to have another dog.

Jackie scraped out the path for us yesterday, and I didn't talk to him any but I heard in a round about way that he wasn't going to farm this yr.

I know he isn't renting Jimmies tobacco acreage

What do you think? Jimmie and Tim left going to Florida Fri, all right Huh!?

Daddy decided to [by *cancelled*] buy some snow tires for his car, sence it seems like we will be getting used to it.

I saw a good program on [page 3] T.V. last Sunday. It might have been the same one you mentioned.

I can amagine you must have been very disgusted if you got fretted. We meet up with things like that.

Edgar & Anne went with John G. and his wife to Richmond to see a show this afternoon, and I kept Ray. They seemed to have enjoyed it a lot.

I can't think of any thing else to write. You write us and let us know how you are.

Lovingly

Mama

Envelope handwritten and labeled with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3 Blackstone, Va. to PFC Ammon Vaughan US52616329 Hq. 10th Bn, 2d Tng. Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 10, 1966.

2-10-66

Dear Ammon:

Well, at last I get a chance to sit down and write to you. Know you have heard about all of our snow. It is melting now but still a slushy mess. At least we are getting the water we needed so bad.

Heard that Mr. Moore was going to be brought to Maple Lawn Nursing Home yesterday. He isn't so much better but has improved enough to be in a nursing home. Mrs. Hoover has been sick with something like Rumatisym [sp *inserted*] of the musclles but can't get a bed in the hospital in Richmond. The doctor said he had 11 on a waiting list ahead of her.

Jimmy Eastwood is in Florida catching all the fish. He and Tim left last Friday. Think they were to stay a week or more.

Carol Powers and her daddy have bought a new Ford. It is pretty and they are so proud of it.

Haven't seen Jackie or Jean since they moved. Jeffrey got a bad fall Sunday on Ice but is still in school. They opened school again Tuesday after 2 full weeks of staying home. Charles got his report card and got excellent on everything except Language and Music and he got [Page1] good on them. She said he had done wonderful the first semester. They grade so different to what they use to.

Everything seems to be running along pretty smoothly around here. Edgar has been having to work every Sat. since it has been snow on the ground to make up for the days they can't send the trucks out. So far I don't think he has to work Saturday. John A. Lee and his wife took Edgar and I to see "Sound of Music" in Richmond, Sunday. We had a wonderful time. If you have an opportunity (Please excuse my fancy spelling – Don't know what is wrong today) by all means go to see the movie. It is the best one I have ever seen. If I have the chance I want to take Charles to see it.

Ammon did you even go out to Carrol's friend's house? He said to tell you to be sure to go.

Have been trying to teach Ray to walk with crutches but he won't let me turn him loose yet. He knows how to get around with them though.

Have gotten Edgar's CB License. Guess [Page 2] he told you he had sent his application in for it. He has also ordered a CB radio for the Car. I was hoping he would put it on the Ford but he said he would have to put it on the Pontiac.

Guess Mrs. Vaughan wrote you about the accident he had on the 15th. Still haven't gotten the car fixed. The insurance company for the other man has to send a man out to see the car. Only \$300.00 damage to it.

Did Mrs. Vaughan write you that Wallace Cliborne has been transferred to Crewe? Edgar said that Donald and Carlene Vaughan are expecting an addition to the family.

Now let me see if I can think of anymore. Did you know Jimmy Doyle from McKenney? I think he was married to Betty Doyle, the home-ec teacher? Anyway he died of a heart attack Tuesday.

They had two shootings this week in Blackstone. One colored woman shot her husband and he wasn't expected to live. Then one colored man shot and killed another yesterday.

I understand that Wallace Stone's house is about ready for them to move back into. They have been busy getting new [Page 3] furniture. Of course, they had to buy almost all new because of the smoke and smell.

Did anyone write you that Lois Avery is expecting. Don't know if she will continue her job or not. Haven't heard her say.

Well, I know I have written enough junk for one time. Take care of yourself but have a good time. Write when you can. Ray says to tell you hello.

Love,
Edgar, Anne and Boys

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan 3 Blackstone Va [*a underlined twice*] to PFC. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 14, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter. Also the money and I shall put [*it inserted*] in the bank for you the very first chance I get. I'm glad if you had some [*to spare & inserted*] if you thought you wouldn't need it to send to put in the bank, but don't deny yourself some pleasure. because I think you need some fun. How are you makeing it? We are doing about as usual. Daddy seemed to have felt a little under the weather along about Thursday, so Friday he took off. Now he

seems to be rested up and feels better. He took off over to Roys this afternoon. While he was gone Jessie & Imogen [Page 1] came.

Edgar, Clyde, and Warren went to Danville this afternoon to a burial of one of Dorene's uncle. Mr Moore seems to be doing better, they brought him to Blackstone to the [word *cancelled* – convelasing *inserted*] home. You see he have's to have so much attention and need the kind of care that they couldn't give him at home. Anne says tell you she didn't [word *cancelled*] aim to make such a mistake about the shooting in Blackstone, but guess you saw the correction in the "Courior." I am glad I had it sent to you, in that way you can keep up with what goes on around here. [page 2] There was a bulletin on T.V. to day saying we might have a tornador today at noon [about 20 miles south of here *inserted*] but we didnt. The wind has been blowing something fierce, but not that bad. All the snow is gone, it turned off real warm along the middle of the wk. and started raining and rained all day Friday & Sat and last night, a slow rain so I hope the ground is [it *cancelled*] wet some now.

Jackie has rented his tobacco acreage out. I heard this afternoon. I think it will be better.

Mrs. Hoover is real sick. Dr Harris says she is completely broken down, he wants her to have complete rest. I'm sure she would appreciate [page 3] just a little card from you. If you find time.

Oh! I would have loved to have seen you last wk. but I don't blame you for not coming. As you say its so far, and with that snow on the ground it was a daisy. Maybe you all can come later.

I don't believe we get that Program up here on T.V. that you were talking about. I tried to get it today, What is the name of it? And what station? I was thinking of Bob Pooles Program.⁷⁷

Lawrence came down last night and ate supper with Ronald. You [page 4] know the boy I wrote you about. He seems to be a nice young man.

I guess that's about all I can think of.

Let us hear from you

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with no return address to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNG Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 28, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

It was so good to have you home, and especially at the same time James & Helen were home. The only thing is that there is such a hubbub I can't think straight. Guess its like every body says I must be getting old. I can't seem to think when there are many around even if I do like to have all home at the same time. What I'm trying to say is every time we get a chance to talk any we are interupted. Oh! well I hadn't ment to get off on such a [th *cancelled*] thought Ha, So glad you all made it [hack *cancelled*] back to camp OK. I don't blame you & Lee. I'd rather not be a hero, than to [page 1] perhaps a dead one, Ha. What a morbid thought.

We didn't get much snow. It rained hailed & snowed a little but didn't amt to anything didn't stick. The ground wasn't even covered, around here. Alltho I heard that it was a little

⁷⁷ There is no concrete reference for this individual. Bob Poole was a radio personality during the 1940s in particular. Whether it is the same is uncertain.

worse a few miles west of us. Ray! is in the Hospital. He has bronichal Pneumonia had to take him Wednesday. I went with Edgar over there this afternoon to see him. He seems to be getting well as could expect. He seemed to be happy and playful [page 2] but you could tell it by the way he coughed. I think he will be over there at least 2 or 3 more days. The rest of us are as usual.

I asked Edgar about the N.G. today, and he says nothing is settled yet, he talked about going with Odie to Ft Lee Tuesday night to see what he could do down there. It [*word cancelled*] is bothering him I can tell, and he seems to have enough on him I think. Any way if any thing happens I will let you know. [page 3] Haven't heard from James & Helen: I hope he hears something allso.

Write us all the news!

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 8, 1966.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter and your money, and injoyed it so much, especially the part about the refreshments, and Hero, and the part about the man that remind your of Raymond. I guess there are lots of people that way, and can't help it. In fact I injoyed all of it, and I will put the money in the bank first chance I get. Glad you are still doing O.K. just keep it up.

Well Ammon so [many things *cancelled*] much has happened in the neighborhood. I hardly know where to start. Its all bad. But I know you want to know. First off Mr Moore died last [page 1] Wednesday night little after nine oclock. It happened that I was over there when he died. I hadn't been over there to see him and that was my first chance so I made up my mind I was going, and was so glad I did. So Ronald & I got off from work and went to the funeral. He was buried in Blackstone. The reason I hadn't been to see him before was because Edgar & Anne had to take Ray to the Hospital and I was having to sort of look after Charles. When I got work. Ray is doing O.K. now. brought him home last wk.

Yesterday morn I went to church and came home, finished dinner and was setting here trying to get the tax papers [page 2] fixed up, when the telephone rang. It was Rachel saying that Lennie Coleman had just died suddenly that certainly came as a shock as I had just seen Connie at church. We will sure miss him in the Community. So I went with Jessie & Imogen down there last night. He will be buried tomorrow at Blanford [*Blandford Cemetery*] in Petersburg. Services will be at Sharon, then his body taken to Banford. Connie is very much upset, as you would expect.

Jessie, Imogen & I had allready planned to go to the 25th wedding anniversary celebration for Gloria's mother & father so we went down there for a few minutes yesterday afternoon to that. They got right many nice gifts. [page 3] Well we sure had some pretty days last wk. But boy she is cold now, alltho sunny. We had right much rain last wk. and yesterday there was some snow flurries and the sun was shining. Guess that why it is cold today.

We are all well here at home just hope we keep well. Maybe next time I write I will have some thing pleasant to write you. You keep the good news rolling. Douglas asked about you. I told him you tried to call him.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 12, 1966.

[Enclosed is a blank check from The First National Bank of Blackstone and two small green papers from the Commonwealth of Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles related to license renewal. It is also written on notebook paper instead of the usual plain stationary.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter and sure was glad to get it, and to know you are OK. So you can disregard part of my letter where I was so anxious to hear from you. I can't help being uneasy.

I know you must feel the same when you dont hear from home. I'll try to do better in the future.

Did you get your letter with your drivers permit application blank in it that I sent you Sat? Let me know.

We are all very well now Thank the Lord. We had [to *cancelled*] 2 beautiful days yesterday and today. I sure made the most of yesterday I just stayed outside just about all day. Ronald & Edgar cut down the old oak tree right out back that was so rotten and allso the apple tree. They were both just about rotten, then we cleaned it all up. And I done right many odd things which I had wanted to do and hadn't had time to do outside. I had wanted to get the garden broken up, but couldn't do it all at one time maybe next time, or maybe if its pretty next Sat we [page 1] might be able to get something done.

I went to church this morning, and this afternoon have been trying to get some bills ready to mail, and wrote to Jr for a change.

Later this afternoon Jean came down a while just walking Jeralines little boy out (He is a cute thing) then Ronald came around and they got to talking cars, and it ended up we went riding in Ronalds & Jeans cars sort of compareing them as you would say. I like Jeans car real well it has so much good room in it.

Garland is some better but still in the Hospital. I talked to Mrs Moore and told her what you said, so she said she had written you thanking you for taking time to write Mr Moore while in the hospital. What you could do if you can get one is get a sympathy card to send her, or I think maybe her letter might give you an opening to drop her a little note.

Write when you can. Everyone always asks about you. Jean allso asked about you this evening.

Lovingly,
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 14, 1966.

Saturday

Dear Ammon_,

What is wrong? Hope you are not sick. I sure hope I will hear from you today. Please don't do like I did that wk I failed to write, or something happened.

We are all well now, and hope we keep well. We have sure had our share of sickness in this community it seems.

Oh! now for some lighter news. Jean E. has bought herself a new Impala Chev. [*Chevrolet*] air conditioned with the works. Nice Huh? sort of reddish looking at a distance. I haven't seen it close up, she got it Wed. I think. And Barbara [*W inserted*] has bought a Chrysler dark blue power steering. some body had [page 1]some money [*Hugh cancelled*] Huh? Got a letter from Helen they are well, and James had gotten some applications to fill out in regards to the job in N.C.[*North Carolina*] He had filled them out and sent them in, and looking and hoping to hear every day from them.

Ammon this is your application for your drivers license. I am sending you a couple of blank checks in case you mess up one you will have another. So you can fill it out and send it in, and let it come on back here if you were here.

As you can see on the information slip the cost is \$6.00 in case you don't remember. Will write again Monday or Tuesday.

Let us hear from you
Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207 postmarked March 21, 1966.

[Letter written in red ink on notebook paper.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and it was great hearing from you. Glad you are O.K. sorry about your blisters, but at least you had some pleasure putting them there. You will have to see if you can get you some tennis shoes. I bet you could have some pleasure in some sports if you get some.

As for the tree which they cut down, Edgar did all the sawing most or part of it but Ronald carried all the logs and [*word cancelled*] limbs to the bushes. Dad & I did most of the raking, it wasn't bad.

And when I got from work yesterday they had spreaded the dirt out here at the well and and firtlizered and sowed some grass seed. I sure hope it comes up and we get a stand of grass.

Ronald had allso plowed the lot out front and the garden. I think Daddy want to sow Lespedizer⁷⁸ in the lot. Spring must be getting in their blood Ha. I am glad you and Lee have each [page 1] other to talk to, it helps to have some one to talk to.

I am allso thankful you have your T.V. I know it helps to pass the time.

I am still injoying Payton Place, and you know by now. The verdict was guilty on Rodney. it has been real excitening I think. I can't help feeling sorry for Steven now, and Betty.

Aunt Jerry Uncle Jessie & Imogen were up here this afternoon, sure did injoy having them. [They wanted to know how you were. *inserted*] And while am on the subject we had a W.M.U. meeting at Garlands Thursday night, they allso had a Deacon meeting, and decided to raise 2 acres of [dark *inserted*] tobacco to help meet our expenses at the church as we are [having *cancelled*, loosing *inserted*] so many of our members by death.⁷⁹ And Garland is better and at home, and Willie Elder is in Hospital, something about his heart.

Ammon I'm telling you a little about Edgar and N.G. [*National Guard*] but don't say anything about it when you write untill I give you the go sign, as it is top secret in a way for him. He is proceeding [page 2] with his plans for a transfer from the N.G. to Reserves. I think its just about done [except *inserted*] a few details. He [*cancelled*] met with some of the higherup yesterday to answer some questions and they tried to talk him into staying on with them. But I think he told them he didn't think it would work. Anne said he seemed real pleased when he came home last night, and I am glad and hope every thing works as he thinks it will. I will let you know for sure when every thing is complete. Can't think of any thing else at this time. Write and let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked March 23, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Got your letter today glad everything is doing fine up there. Things are going about the same down here, nothing new. Sounds like you'll are getting things done up there now, just don't let Ronald over exert himself. If nothing comes up might be up there to inspect the 1st of April.⁸⁰ Depends on whether Lee can get a 3 day pass. That wiregrass is getting right bad in that lot out in front, and Lespadeza doesn't help stop it. Why not try some Soybeans, can thrash them or bale for hay. Spring has broke down here, got up in the 80's today. Sure am glad to see it. Guess it was a good idea to raise the dark tobacco this time. If can get everybody together it's no

⁷⁸ A legume type of grass often used as a hay for livestock.

⁷⁹ Around this time my uncle, Edgar Thomas Vaughan, was treasurer of Sharon Baptist Church. He made the remark during an informal conversation that the preacher made twenty-five dollars a month. The low amount meant that Warren Rawles, the pastor at the time, had two additional jobs on the side to make ends meet. Several months they could not even raise the salary amount and had to come up with alternative means of getting it. Additionally, one of the ways a member could help the church in lieu of money was to donate land to farm, crop revenue, etc. particularly at the time of death. It could be willed to the church and this is how many of them survived when the economy was down.

⁸⁰ It is interesting that he notes the date without referencing his birthday, which is on the same day.

trouble much. Tell Anne she can write most anytime now, cause I wrote last. Just to leave all the murders, stabbings, etc off. Not much to write about. Write more later.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 28, 1966.

[Written in red ink.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter. Glad you are still making it all right. I'm still more than glad that you have your T.V. to help you pass some of you free time. What do you think of Peyton Place now? At last it seems that it will turn out very well.

We are all well as usual. Nothing going on to amount to any thing and I am thankful.

Jr & Muriel & boys came Friday night and left going up to her mothers last night. They seem to be getting on very well, alltho the boys had colds.

I went to church this morn. We had a fairly good crowd, and this afternoon I went with Imogen & Jessie down to see Willie Elder who had just returned from the Hospital. It seems that he had a slight attack with his heart, or that is what I understand.

And about a wk ago Wallace Stones second son had an accident on a motorcycle and hurt him right badly. He is in the Hospital alltho he seems to be doing very [page 1] well.

Wee havint planted any thing yet in the garden as it was too wet. We had a real nice rain last wk. and we needed it, as it had gotten sort of dry.

Did I write you that Ronald had gotten his orders for summer training? and that he will train at Camp Pickett May 22 to Jun 2?

I hope it will be so you can come home this wk end, and Hope Lee can make it. It is nice that you two can sort of console each other.
Write and will listen to hear.

Lovingly,
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 28, 1966.

[Inside is a greeting card with ducks flying on the cover.]

Exterior: For You, SON On Your Birthday

Interior: Just want you to know on your special day You're a Son to be proud of in every way, And it's natural to wish that a Son so dear Has a Happy Birthday and a wonderful year!

[Handwritten] Hope you have a nice Birthday, and many many more,

Lovingly

Mom & Dad.

Envelope is handwritten with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3 Blackstone, Va. to PFC. Ammon Vaughan US52616327 Hq, 19th BN, 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, South Carolina 29207 postmarked March 30, 1966.

Greeting card with a dancing man on the cover that states "let yourself go on your Birthday!" and on the inside has three faces with C-R-Y and beneath says "FOR JOY! YOU ONLY HAVE ONE A YEAR!" with a handwritten statement "Hope you have a nice Birthday and many many more. Edgar, Anne Charles & Ray."

Letter inside dated 3-30-66

Dear Ammon:

This will have to be a quick letter as it seems like there is more work to do every day but know I had better write to you. I have really let you down.

Warren, Ann, Doreen, Gene, and Children are coming tonight for supper. Each family is going to bring something. Gene and Doreen will bring the steaks for the Grownups. Anne, Swedish Meat Balls for the Children and Edgar is going to fix Shrimp. Wish you were here. Anyway that is why I have to hurry, I have to clean up this morning and this afternoon I have to go ge the automobile license. Boy, it is going to hurt this year with 2 cars.

Did your mama write you that Parker Cousins had a new car along with Odie and Jean Eastwood. Don't know who it will be next.

Certainly hope you can get home this weekend. Oh, Edgar got his CB Radio and has really enjoyed it. I have used it some also. I usually talk to Margie Ingram.

Ray has gotten spoiled rotten since he was sick. Have got to straighten him out.

Took Charles with me to Lynchburg Sunday and gave him a dollar to get a cone of ice cream. The little rascal got him a 25¢ cone of cream. Can you imagine? It lasted him 30 miles or more. Well guess I had been close for this time and get some work done. Hope to see you this weekend.

Love

Edgar, Anne & Boys

Envelope with return address From Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone Va [a underlined twice] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 11, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

It was so nice to have you home last wk end. The time flies by so fast. But glad you all made it home O.K. I can amagine you do find it sort of dull with all the boys out, in the field.

How long was the man gone on the Golf Tournament? Know you were glad when he came back. I'm glad too that you could find a ham to take back to him.

You know when we rode out last Sunday to see about the fire or to see if there was a fire? Well we just went the wrong way, as you said in the Courior, if you got it. Harry Echols had

right much fire, said it burned up 7 buildings over near the old house. They don't have any idea how it started.⁸¹

Well we had right much company today. Helen and James & boys came yesterday, and we got up this morning and went to church [page 1] had the nicest crowd I think I noticed on the board we had about 87 for Sunday school, and more came in later. We allmost had to look for a place to sit. How about that? And collection was over \$14.00 for S.S. [*Sunday School*] Just wish it was that way all the time. Wished you could have been there. Then this afternoon Jessie & Imogen came, & Erma & Jean & Geraline, and of course Edgar & family.

Ronnie called us Thursday night and we went down and got the tax papers fixed up and sent off. All of us will get back a little money I'm glad to say. I'm not sure just how much, but every little bit helps.

Can't think of any thing else Take it easy and let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked April 15, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things are still fine down here hope it is up there. Would like to have been up there Easter but can't have everything. These people ship out Friday night, so won't have to work but a half day next week. We have just had a thunder storm and it really rained. Nothing much going on the past week. Did James go fishing last weekend. Just nothing to write. Write more later.

Ammon

Envelope with return address Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 18, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and glad to get it. Of course I'd like to hear what you are doing, but if there isn't anything to write about, just a note is good cause I begin to worry if I don't hear something. So you just keep the notes a rolling, and I'll be satisfied.

Hope you [are *inserted*] fine now. How did you make out with the C rations? I'm sure by the time you got some cooking you were glad. We are very well here, But Anne has "flu." The Old Timey kind. She has been right sick. In bed since Friday night, and you know she don't give up easy. She is a little better. Sure hope she hurrys and get OK.

I would liked to have helped her some, but had to work yesterday morn 5 hrs. Then this morn we had communion at church so I had to get that ready. I sure do miss you helping me.

⁸¹ This was verified in the *Courier-Record* newspaper archives. The facts are Irene provides them are accurate.

James didn't catch but one fish while down here, and that was a Pike, right nice one. He said he might have [page 1] caught more but he had all the boys, and said they scared them all away. And I can see that they might have done it, as Odies [,] Edgars [,] and his were over there, but it really was cool and windy.

I fineally gave Mrs Coburn your new address, so I hope you got your Courier better this wk.

Well Friday was Dads last day down on the Toll road, so maybe he can get a little more rest. Walker & Mr Vaughan gave him a large box of cigars. I think he was a little surprised, and he got a letter from Mr. Pershing commending him, and wishing him all happiness and luck, and all that stuff on his retirement.⁸² They are letting him keep his pass on the road till June.

He has to go to Petersburg in the morn. to the Social Security board and I am getting off to go with him. I don't think he will have to be down there long.

I had hoped to plant the garden yesterday but just couldn't. Maybe we will get it done next wk. [page 2] can't think of any thing else right now, write to us, every chance you get, just a note will do.

Lovingly
Your Mother.

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked April 20, 1966.

[written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Got your letter today and that everything is fine. I got the Courier, it had the right address on it. I didn't even [*word cancelled*] write the letter to them, just didn't do it. Lee & I took off riding Sunday and ended up in Georgia, Augusta that is. It's only about 80 miles from here, and we thought we'd see what those Georgia peaches looked like. The flowers are really pretty here at Columbia, especially the Azaleas and those things that grow on vines up trees. I'm going to get Lee's camera and take some pictures this week. We also went up to Hilton Fild [*sp inserted*] and watched them crazy people parachute jump. They would jump out right above us and free fall till I didn't think they were going to open their parachutes. There must be a better way to have fun. It sure is peaceful around here with all those people gone. Kinda wish no more would come in. The SMAJ [*Sergeant Major*] is in Florida this week hope he'll enjoy it, he has money to burn anyhow. Hope Anne is better from the flu, hope Ray or Charles don't get it too. So James didn't catch any fish, they just needed me there to show them how it's done. I'm sure everything will work out fine about Daddy retiring, most likely it was the right thing. I'm sure something can be found to make some on the side around there. Hope you'll can get the garden planted this weekend, while all that company was there last weekend would have been a good time. I hope the next time I write I'll have made Sp/4. There's a new Army regulation out on promotions and it really put the clamp on making E-4. You hafta have 8 months in grade and 18 months in active duty time. But you can waive part of both, so I typed the waiver up and the Major [page 1 *arrow drawn*] signed it [*word cancelled*] and hand carried it on up to the higher

⁸² It is strange that this is the first reference to a retirement for Raymond. One would think that if it was planned, there would be more mention of it. Furthermore, what prompted it? What were their plans? Nothing is mentioned of any of the motivating factors behind this life changing event.

Hdq. Sure did make me feel good though what he wrote about me on it.⁸³ It'll be just luck if I do get it, I'm not expecting anything though. If I get it it'll be because I'm such a sharp & handsome soldier and all that. Can't think of anything else.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 25, 1966.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter and of course so glad to hear from you. And glad you will have a little break in there.

I hope for you that the step up goes through, but as you say we can only hope for the best. Just hope every thing continues to be O.K. for you and you stay well.

Anne seems to be doing very well now, at least well enough for she & Edgar to take off up to James & Helens. Ha. Edgar wanted to go while he could, as next month he will be having more wk end trainings and wouldn't get to go. This was about the first [time *inserted*] any thing had really got Anne down. And [word *cancelled*] as Dr Harris said about Daddy, she didn't know how to be sick Ha. I'm glad. They all seem better, they have so much sickness.

Daddy is injoying being here at home, alltho [word *cancelled*] he worked on Garlands & Cliff Chandlers Tractors, and worked on his lawn mowers some, so he kept right busy all last wk.

We got the garden planted Sat morn. I'm glad to say. Now we just need some rain, it is real dry up here. Helen [page 1] said they had a big rain up there Friday. I mean I kept busy yesterday after we finished the garden & had lunch. I had recieved a card from Helen wanting me to see if I could find some of those straw hats like I had bought for the children one time. They wanted to use them for the little boys in Kennys grade for the May dance. So I took off to Blackstone and got them for her so I could send them on by Anne. Then I swept a little on the back yard. Don't look like Daniel will ever come to clean it for us.

This morn went to church. By the way we will have the 75th anniversary celebration for Sharon the 7th of August. I hope it will be so you can be here for that. And Revival will begin the 10th of July running a wk.

Oh! The Boys of the Telephone Co. gave a big steak supper at the Hunt Club for Butch Cumby last night. A couple of the cooks at Pickett cooked them on a grill. Ronald said they were real good.

Daddy got his check from the Insurance Co. last wk. so maybe we will get the bath room now. I'm sure we will if nothing drastic don't happen [page 2] Well you see what has happened, pen played out. Anyway I can't think of any thing else right now.

You write and let us know what goes on. Every body is always asking about you.

Lovingly
Mama

⁸³ Ammon kept a copy of this paperwork which remains in the author's possession. It references his work ethic and professionalism.

Envelope is handwritten with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3, Box 144 Blackstone, Va. to PFC. Ammon Vaughan US52616327 Hq. 10th BN, 2d Tng. Bde. Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 27, 1966.

4/27/66

Dear Ammon,

Just a note to let you know we are still thinking of you even if you don't hear from us. We are finally getting some nice rain. They planted the garden Saturday so it should come right on with this warm rain.

We went to Vienna Saturday afternoon. Had a real nice time I was pretty worn out after my fight with the flu though. Think I might live now though. Hope you don't catch that stuff. It isn't anything to play around with. We went to the Little League Practice game Sunday Afternoon. Jeff pitched a couple of endings.

Edgar got another CB Radio from James. One he repossessed. He said he was getting it for the house but I think he will end up putting it in the car instead.

Don't know too much news, as I haven't talked to many people since I was sick. Can you imagine me being too sick to talk. Well, brother I sure was.

Ray is coming along fine with his crutches. He walked all the way from youall's front yard to the store yesterday. It took us an hour to do it but he did it. He walks around the yard by himself with the crutches. The little fellow slept until 10 o'clock this morning. We went down to Normand Ingram's last night and didn't get home until late.

Well guess I had better close for now [Page 1] as it is almost time for the mail.

Did anyone write you that Jackie is working at Camp Pickett now? I understand they have hired right many people.

Jean Eastwood is trying to make all the money. She has been working part time at Petersburg hospital and has regular job at Reynold's also.

Well, know I haven't written much news but will try to do better next time.

Love,
Edgar, Anne and Boys

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked April 28, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson letterhead]

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear everyone is fine up there, things are still fine here. Not much happening the last few days. Hope Edgar & family enjoyed their trip up to James & Helen. I'm sure you'll got the garden planted in time what with it raining some. As you say hope can get the Bathroom soon, when do know won't be able to keep Daddy out of the shower. My promotion didn't materialize guess I'll have to wait a few weeks. The Army has it now how you can made E-3 in 4 months but they raise the price on E-4 and [word cancelled] we're caught in the lull. We get

paid Saturday which always helps. I laugh at Lee, he is getting right fat & getting a pot belly I tease him about it. Can't think of anything else.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to PFC Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 2, 1966.

[Written in red ink.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter Friday, and of course allways glad to hear from you.

Sorry your application didn't go through. But better luck next time. You and Lee must be making up for lost time in your eating while the other boys were in the field. I bet some fresh cooked food did taste good. So Lee is putting on some weight. How about you? You will be needing some more pants if that keep up Huh? Ha Ha. [*word cancelled*] I rather think you could use some now couldn't you?

We are as usual. Daddy seems to be doing pretty good, doing around here fooling with tractors and lawn mowers.

We have had some nice rain since Wed. and had a real nice one this afternoon. We had just finished eating and getting up dinner dishes when in walked Annie & Samuel. Sure was surprised to see them so then we went down to Jerries and visited her. Had a real injoyable [page 1] afternoon, and as we were finishing up a bite of Supper, Hinton King came and [*word cancelled*] visited with Raymond a while, and I had to bake a couple of pies for the Ruritan supper for tomorrow night, so I just finished them.

Jr called and talked to us a while this afternoon, they were well. I think the boys wanted to know how the puppy was doing.

Oh! Let me tell you, if all goes as planned by the time you come home again we will have a throne for you to set on and a bath [*word cancelled*] tub, Ha. The men are to come tomorrow to start on it, and the way they are set up, they shouldn't be but about 2 days completeing it. I'm so glad. They are from Victoria, and it is 2 brothers and one of them has the out side work and the other the plumming. Of course they both have men to help them.

Can't think of any thing else right now. Take care of your self, and let us hear from you. Love from all of us to you

Your Loving Mother

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to PFC Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 10, 1966.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you? And how was the trip back to camp Sunday morn.? Alright I sure hope.

Daddy and I went down and got your car after I came from church, and we had a little laugh, as it played out off gas just as we got down to the house. Was glad it didn't happen with you going down to McKenny Sat night. It would have been all right even had it given out coming on back with us as I drove behind him all the way home.

We ate dinner down at Anne's & Edgars, she insisted that we do it. They gave us a bathroom set, [for *cancelled*] including mat and stool cover. So we will be set Ha.

Dad and I went up and picked out the tile this afternoon after I got off from work, and you guessed it, I choose a green, a shade that I thought was pretty. And we will wait until after Thursday and see what Dr says about Raymond as the man said Thursday [wk. *cancelled*] would be the earliest date he could come down to finish up. And as you know we have the rest of [page 1] the [word *cancelled*] sheet rock to put up and that end next to the tub to get fixed. But I hope it wont be long even if Raymond does have to stay a few days. Will let you know.

Take care of your self, and it sure was a pleasant surprise to have you home.

Write to us, and I will try to do the same.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond HVaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked May 10, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Monday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well we made it back fine no trouble, we got here about day break Sunday morning. I slept most of the day, I wasn't tired but I didn't have any trouble sleeping. Lee had been going with this girl in Richmond [word *ccancelled*] about a year but this weekend he went with her sister also this other girl that had been writing him almost everyday. He can get into more predicaments, he tells me all about it when we are coming back down here. A PFC [*Private First Class*] that is a clerk just down the road from us has gotten orders for VN. We eat in the same company and I know him pretty good. I tell him all sorts of stuff about Va. He's a pretty good boy, I might ask him to come up there with us when we come next time. It shouldn't be too long now on the Bathroom, I'm kinda looking forward to seeing what it's gonna turn out like. Can't think of anything else, write more later.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to P.F.C. Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 16, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and was so glad to hear from you. Glad you & Lee made it home or rather to camp OK. And I hope it will be so you can bring the boy home with you, if you think he can stand us. Ha. I do hope we get the bath room completed this wk. I declare it is more to it than I had any idea, but I hope we have every thing ready so they can go on with it

now. Edgar & Sonny fixed the rest of the sheet rock up and filled in at the end of the tub and hung the bath room door last night. The reason we couldn't go on with it last wk was every body was so busy couldn't get the help, and then after Daddy had to go to Dr that was a delay, any way I do hope things work now.

Dr told Raymond that he is doing real well, go right ahead and do any thing he wants to do, but he has to go back in 6 months for check up. [page 1] Sonny & Raymond hung the screen door this afternoon. It didn't take any time not over 30 min. He is real good at that work. I didn't have any idea he was so good, and as he is working at Pickett. He doesn't have much time as you know.

I walked out in the garden and started to get a few berries I noticed a few yesterday, and found that they are really getting ripe. I picked my large roaster full, and as you know the first ones are all ways the largest ones. They were real pretty. I wished for you. I hope there will still be some when you come again.

Helen called this afternoon they were all right, she was just wondering why I hadn't written. I told her I just stayed so busy. She and Kenny were home, while Jeff, & James, had gone to play ball. The cold spell had ruined their garden they had planted potatoes tomatoes and such, and that frost fixed it. They had more up there than we did. It burned ours a little, but didnt do much damage.

Take it easy, and write us every chance you get
Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of PFC Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond HVaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked May 18, 1966.

Enclosed letter dated 12 May 66 on 201-Vaughan, Ammon C PFC E-3 stating:

1. Request a waiver of two months of time in grade for promotion to SP3 be granted concerning PFC Vaughan.
2. PFC Vaughan is a dedicated soldier. Since his appointment as 10th Battalion clerk in January 1966 he has adjusted and improved himself to where he can supervise all administrative functions of the Battalion Headquarters in a superior manner. He is particularly outstanding in his knowledge of Morning Reports and through his continuous checking and counseling, all administrative matters in the Battalion have improved tremendously.

Eugene A Shea
Maj, Infantry
Commanding

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear everything is fine up there. Sounds like you'll are getting the bathroom about through with. Sure Daddy was glad to hear what the doctor had to say, just don't get too frisky. Sure wish I was there to get some of those fresh strawberrys, hope they turn out pretty good. Things are going pretty much the same down here nothing new. If you'll don't think I have everybody fooled, just read the inclosure. The Col at Bde Hdqs [*Colonel at Building Headquarters*] told the SMAJ that I would make Sp4 this time haven't gotten the order yet but it

is due this week or next week. I'm pretty sure Lee will make it too. The SMAJ bought himself a new Pontiac Grand Prix, its right sharp. Hope he'll be satisfid with it, I don't know about the gas mileage.

Don't know much to write, write more later.

Ammon

Envelope with return address Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a underlined twice] to PFC Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 24, 1966.

[Written on notebook paper.]

Monday night

Dear Ammon

How are you makeing it? According to your letter and the letter you sent along with it you must be doing OK. I sure am glad, and hope you can continue to do good. I know you can, so keep up the good works.

We are all kicking pretty high. Nothing unusal going on, all well as of now.

Ronald went to Pickett Sat. and what do you think? He met up with one of his buddies that was at Ft Riley when he was there so he [page 1] brought him on down here Sat eve - seemed a pretty decent boy. I'm glad he met up with some one he knew. Have you by chance met up with any one else down there?

Well we have the Throne and bath room about complete. Just a little painting and shower curtains to put up. Any way they are ready to use and we are using them. Ha We all took baths in there Sat night.

I didn't notice that the first page of paper had been cut till I had started and it is so late I went on and didn't rewrite it. I had gathered a dishpan and kettle full of berries and started capping them,⁸⁴ and just stoped and put them in the refrigerator so could write. I didn't want you to wonder what had happened. Nothing has happened except so busy trying to get things done.

We are awful dry up here again and cool. I hope it will soon [page 2] rain. The garden is doing fair considering the weather.

You write and take care of your self.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address Mrs. R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a underlined twice] to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S. 52616327 Hq 10th BN. 2nd TNg Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 31, 1966.

[Written on notebook paper.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

⁸⁴ This means taking the stems out of cutting the extraneous material off. For strawberries, for example, it's removing the entire top.

We recieved your letter, and so glad to get it, and congratulation on your promotion. I'm so glad for you. And the others allso. It does my heart good to know you are trying. And allso getting the job done. Don't pay any attention to the other boys ribbing you. Its like you say you know which side your bread is buttered on.⁸⁵

We are all doing well as usual. Except little Ray seems like something is allways happening to him. Anne had set him in the sink to wash off his legs and was standing at the table fixing some slaw, when he decided to turn on the hot water and scalded his legs right bad, but Dr says he thinks they will be all right. It is bad that it happened right at this time, as he has an appointment in Richmond. I do hope he can make a good impression on the Dr over there when he [good *cancelled*] goes. [page 1]⁸⁶

Monday night

I didn't finish this last night, so here I am again

Jr & Muriel came home for the wk end. They seemed to be getting on OK.

We didn't have any more company. Edgar, Warren, & Warren's [farther *cancelled*] father inlaw, came by going fishing awhile yesterday. They brought 3 real nice fish home. I guess they had a little fun.

Ronald gets to come home real often, actually he hasn't missed but about a couple days, he says he doesn't have any thing to do much.

We planted some more garden this afternoon. Erma came down just about the time we started so Anne had to do just about every thing, so it was rather late before we finished.

Guess I'd better get to bed and get some [scratch out] slep, and hope you can get to come home when I have my [*word cancelled*] vacation. Write when you can, don't make it too long tho.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked June 8, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well we're here again, we made it back fine no trouble. Enjoyed being home that short while. I forgot to pay Daddy the money he let me use, I'll send it next letter. He knows what it is for. We next week these people go on bivouac so that means I'll be eating sea rations most of the week. Nothing much happening write more next time. Got to see what Red Skelton⁸⁷ is gonna do here.

⁸⁵ This is a reference to a few different things. The phrase about bread and butter refers to an understanding that it's not always what peers think of you, but what those controlling your pay and future think of you. Also, she reinforces the earlier notes on Ammon's talents lending themselves to teasing from others.

⁸⁶ An odd choice of wording. It is almost as if Irene is concerned over Raymond's appearance to go see the doctor, indicating a formality involved with this activity. The reader could possibly conclude that in Irene's mind she felt that if he made a good impression, it would somehow encourage the doctor to cure him or treat him more effectively.

⁸⁷ Reference to the radio and television personality known widely for his role as a clown. He had a weekly television show on this night during this time period. It was a comic relief program, with typical slapstick style humor. This

Ammon

Envelope with no return address to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 9, 1966.

Monday night,

Dear Ammon_

How are you makeing it? Did you all have any trouble going back to Fort Jackson Sunday? Hope you didn't Lee seems to be a friendly sort of fellow doesn't he? I bet he is fun to be with, especially some one like you who don't have much to say. Ha.

Was good you all made it home, for the visit. I know it costs you all to come home but hope you might get to come when I have my vacation. I wont be too dissopointed if you can't cause I know uncle Sam comes first. Ha. "Such is life. " We are all well as usual, and we just had a nice rain, something we really needed.

The boys up at Pickett just shot off a loud shot, and I allmost jumped out of my chair Ha, so excuse my mistakes⁸⁸ [page 1] Dad took off up to Victoria Monday and got the other tile for the little room. I hope we can get it down soon. He allso went to Petersburg and got one of those little shelves for the bath room.

Roy came over and visited with him yesterday, he said he stayed a good while. I bet they had a ball Ha.

I'd better get to bed its nearly 11 oclock and I don't know any thing else. You write every chance you get, and let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with no return address to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 13, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_

So glad you all made it back O.K. and every thing all right. But I do sort of feel sorry for you having to eat C. ration's. I guess you will sort of learn to like them after a while. Ha Ha

Anne is bakeing you some cookies to send and plans to try to get them off in tomorrow's mail. So you can be the on the look out for them.

The vacation bible school starts tomorrow, and she is all up in the air over it. I remember how I used to injoy working in it.

We fineally got the tile put down in the little room. It looks real nice, Edgar and Ronald did it yesterday afternoon. Now we will have to do the little finishing up with the paint job and will be through.

talk about television allowed the family to have a connection to each other, knowing they would both be watching at the same time and be able to discuss it in letters.

⁸⁸ The explosions were common occurrences throughout the day and/or night in this area, although the residents were never aware of when it would actually happen. Most of the time, they were mild enough to be ignored. The homes in the area have cracks in the walls and/or ceilings to indicate the level of activity over the years. As a child, I can remember the plaster walls in Irene's home chipping away.

We got an invitation to Mary Anne's Graduation, and your name was on the card also. Today was the big day for her. [page 1] Ammon did you by chance read a S.C. Daily paper Friday or Saturday the 9th or 10th, if you had you would have seen in there about Jack Eastwood's death. I'm sure [it *cancelled*] if it was in the paper, which I know it was it would have been.

[Andrew *cancelled*] Dr Andrew Jackson, or A.J. Eastwood of Gaffney S.C. President of Lime Stone College. He died suddenly of heart attack Friday Morning.

Ada, Jimmie, Jean and Luthers family also Tim and family are down there [word *cancelled*] now. [See if you can locate one and read about it *inserted*] I'm sure it will have a big write up. It sure came as a shock to me, and everyone else.

I went down to Jessies a while this afternoon but they had gone some where visiting so I visited Doug & Gloria a while, they asked about you. Write us whenever you can

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked June 15, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Got your letter today and that was bad about Jack Eastwood, I had not seen it in the newspaper. I am trying to get hold of last Fridays & Saturdays paper to look again. If I do find it I'll send it to you'll to see. I got the cookies Ann sent today, they are real good, and there are plenty of them too. Not too much happening around here, it is real peaceful with all these people out on Bivouac. I sold the small bookcase that I had for ten dollars, it was a clear profit since I didn't pay anything for it. Don't guess I'll get to see much tonight on TV since they're having elections down here today. I just liable to be on TV one of these days playing golf, I have gotten so I can really drive them a long way. Don't know anything else write more later. The money is for Daddy.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone Va [a *underlined twice*] to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 20, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter. So glad you are still OK. and real glad Anne could get the cookies cooked and sent to you while you were on your diet Ha. We are all O.K. right now. We have really had some rain & storms, Thursday night was a humdinger. Wind, hail, and rain. I mean it was a washer, most people say it was the worst washer they had ever seen, and thunder and lightening. It done a lot of damage to a lot of the crops. Arthur Prosis crop was about completely destroyed. But no deaths that I know of.

Ronald has been having to work over time and some night work allso. He [was *cancelled*] worked all day yesterday, and was called back out last night. Came back in about 1 oclock and worked all day today, so they are having a time. [page 1] So you sold you little bookcase. I don't blame you, but I couldn't help thinking how like daddy you sounded Ha Ha. And I'm glad to know you are injoying some sports. May be you can injoy playing some when you come home.

Daddy said you didn't owe him no money, he didn't know what you sent it for.⁸⁹

The bible school finished up and they had the commencement Friday night. The little folks did real well. I think Anne was about pooped.

Did you see in the paper where Bill will be going to work at Newport News Tuesday? Wonder how long he will work, or if he will get deferred? I can't think of any thing else right now.

Write and let us hear from you

[over written bottom left corner and circled]

Lovingly

Mama

Oh! I forgot to tell you we have had snaps and squash out of the garden, real good too.

Envelope with no return address to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked June 27, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are things at this time? We recieved your letter and as usual am all ways glad to get it.

We are all very well, except for the hot weather. Yesterday and today have been schorchers. On the back porch the heat was 97° how about that? and there was right much breeze stirring. Its beginning to get dry again.

The garden is doing fair especially the early things, we have string bean galore. I gathered a dish pan full last night, and Aunt Imogen got a little tub & 1 bucket full off the same row and we only got about half way the row. Ada is going to finish picking them in the morning, and I have [had *cancelled*] gathered 4 good tomatoes ripe. In a few days we should be getting right many.⁹⁰

I went with Anne down to see Charlotte Hardy this afternoon. I hadn't had a chance to go see her sence she came from the Hospital, she looked right peaked⁹¹ [page 1] but I guess it will take a little time. And Estelle has to go back to the Hospital and be operated on again for the same thing she was operated on before. They will operate Tuesday. Warren said this morn. if it keeps up, if we want to see any of the Cliborne's will have to go to the Hospital to see them.

⁸⁹ Raymond liked to do things without acknowledgement or credit. It was common for him to give donations to the church anonymously, or allow other neighbors to borrow money knowing they wouldn't pay him back. In this case, he probably gave Ammon some money and didn't want anyone to know it. Ammon probably felt guilty knowing the circumstances of the family by this point, and tried to return it.

⁹⁰ It is common practice in this area to share whatever you grow in your garden with neighbors and relatives without expecting any kind of payment. There was also a social aspect of this as well. Women could pick in pairs or groups and talk as they performed the tasks. They could later take the buckets or baskets up to a porch or shaded area and prepare the vegetables while continuing to have discussions.

⁹¹ The term, used in this area, means pale, sickly, or unnatural.

Edgar had a little accident with one of those old carts [up at the plant *inserted*] trying to get it started and some way the thing knocked against his leg and bruised and scratched it right bad so he is limping. I don't think its serious tho.

Jack Wainwright has bought a new car a Chrysler Product I'm not sure just what its called. Raymond said he saw him pass up at the store this afternoon. Aunt Imogen asked about you this evening, wanting to know how you were and all. I'm sorry you can't be with us for our vacation but I guess thats the way it will have [page 2] to be for about 10 more months. Huh? We hope we can get to see Jr this year as we haven't been sence he moved. I wish I could come to see you, but maybe I'd better not.

I will try to find out something from James for you.

Write every chance you get.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked July 5, 1966.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you making it this hot weather? It has been real warm up here for the past few days. They tell me it was awful up here yesterday.

Did you get to go any place over the wk end? I do hope you did, I felt bad taking the trip down to Jr's and you not along. It sure was a nice trip and the scenes were simply beautiful.

And you should have been along and seen and heard your Daddy. He was a card.⁹² But really It didn't seem to bother him all going down there, or up which ever you call it. But Jr took us on a sight seeing trip yesterday, so you can amagine the rest.

But he is glad now that he went and he will have a lot to tell you when you come home Ha Ha. [page 1] Jr & Family were well and seemed to be getting on fine, and I sure do like that part of the country.

We heard from Helen last wk and she said she wasn't sure just what time they would come down, but it would be in August. They will wait until they find out how the little League ball team comes along, and where they will go, if they win out this year. They are wrapped up in it. So as soon as I can find out from them will let you know.

Aunt Erma just left from down here. She came on down after we got home. I forgot to mention we left here early Sat morn and came back today. I'm sure I will have a full wk. as I have so many things to do, and I will wait until you come to go more into detail about our trip.

You write and tell us how you are and if youall did go any place [page 2] sure hope you did.

We were thinking about you, and I asked Jr about how far he thought it was from where we were to where you were. It was a right good little way.

Can't think of any thing else.

Lovingly

⁹² This meant he was probably using colorful language and telling jokes or just acting humorous. In the context of these letters, it displays a liveliness, energy, and/or happiness that has been missing given the state of his overall health.

Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked July 7, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wed

Dear Mom & Dad,

Am glad to hear you'll had a good trip out to Tennessee, know it was enjoyable. Wish I could have gone too, I didn't go anywhere just stayed around here. Lee went up to N.C. to see his folks. His mother had been a little sick so he decided to go up & see them. I could have gone but I didn't care about going up there so I stayed here. Looks like the only way I'm gonna get to Myrtle Beach is with my own car, I'm going some way before the summer is over. Nothing much else happening down here, the companies have started getting in troops for the coming cycle. I wish James would hurry up & tell what week of vacation he's going to take, either the first or second week in August preferably. The boy that I had spoke of about coming up there with me left for Calif enroute to Vietnam. I'll kinda miss talking to him, telling him the good things about Va & the bad from Calif where he was from. I can't think of anything else. Don't forget you're on vacation this week [*word cancelled*] and don't try to see how much work you can do.⁹³

Ammon

Envelope with no return address to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked July 11, 1966.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_

We recieved your letter injoyed it very much. Glad you are O.K. even if you did have a lonesome wk end. One thing about you, you can usually find some way to pass the time even if it's sort of lonesome. And I do wish you could have been with us on our trip. Maybe when you come home to stay we can go again.

But we couldn't take our trip up to James and Helen's seems like it must have sort of shook Daddy up and made his stomach sore again so he didn't feel like going up there, Guess will have to go later on a wk end. I think it was because of that spell of colitus he had a few wks ago, it takes a while to get completely over it. He is feeling some better now.

At least I did get a few things done while on my [*word cancelled*] vacation, Anne & I took Lassie⁹⁴ down to Colonial Heights to a Vet and left her from Wed till yesterday to have her spayed, and given all the shots she need to take allso wormed [page 1] her. So now she is here convelasing Ha (really she is) The Dr told me to keep her [*quite cancelled*] quiet. She is doing

⁹³ Ammon was always protective and concerned for his mother, Irene. He took her in when she began with symptoms of Alzheimer's until he simply could not provide the level of care she needed. His ideas about women working were complex. In my case, he was completely against participation in athletics or getting a part-time job because it was too much of a workload.

⁹⁴ This was Irene's dog, named after the famous "Lassie" of movies and television. She cared a great deal about this collie. My only memory connected with her (because she was still alive when I was a child) was the fact that she was so big in size as to be ridden like a horse. She had a friendly and calm disposition.

right well, I'm making her lie on an old blanket, you'd be surprised how she behaves. Almost like a person. Ha.

Our Revival starts tomorrow night I hope we have to good one.

Did I tell you Brenda has gone to work over at Reynolds, riding with Sarah C, Jean E, and the others who rides together. She seems to like over there just fine, lots more money she was up here a few minutes ago.

I sure hope you get to go to Myrtle beach. In fact I was talking yesterday saying I hoped you got a chance to see some of that country down there.

I called Helen Thursday and told her we wouldn't be able to make it for the wk end, and she said it would depend on how the ball teams came out in the little league as to when they might get to come. Jeffs team was having their last game last night. But last year you remember? James had to go see the other team playoff. [page 2] Any way I do hope when they do come it will be favorable for you.

It is beginning to get dry again up here. And it has been windy today, and you know when it does it dries out that much faster. Edgar had Drill again today. Poor fellow he keeps in such a rush all time.

Ronald was called out to work yesterday afternoon, seems like a truck had broken off one of the telephone poles up the other side of South Hill, a little more over time Huh! Can't think of any thing else right now.

Write to us and let us know how you are. Every one asks about you that I come in contact with

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with no return address Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d TNG Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked July 18, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and injoyed it so much. It had a light touch in a way, and sort of funny so got a chuckle or two Ha. Glad you are OK. even if your buddy is sort of reniging on you, I hope if you take your car [back with you *inserted*] you have good luck with it. I can't blame you for wanting to see some of the country while you have time.

You spoke of the heat. You can rest assured you all weren't by your self. It has been terrible up here allso, and last wk was a humdinger. It was from 100° to 103° and over, but there was a storm around North west of here, and cooled things off, to where we had to crawl under a sheet again at night.

Our revieveal ended Friday night and it was real nice not too large crowds.

You spoke of bringing on some S.C. Peaches. I wouldn't mind having a few. I haven't seen or heard [page 1] of any around up here, I'm afraid most of them got killed.

Nancy came and is down at Brendas. I don't know how things are going, but I can't think Ronald is too interested. Last [Thursday *cancelled*] Wednesday when I got from work who did I find here but Helen and the boys. I sure was surprised, and glad to have them. James came this wk end and went back today, But Helen and Boys are staying on till Wednesday. I'm real glad to have them.

James says he will be here the wk of the 15 of August, so I'm hoping everything works out for you all, and we will look for you. Every body was asking about you at church, especially Mrs Russell seemed real interested in hearing from you, asking all sorts of questions.

Daddy still hasn't completely [got *inserted*] over that colon trouble he had. I guess he just don't do like he should, so he has to suffer. I told Helen may be she could see that he took his pills like he should. He just wont take time to do it. I hope he will soon be over it, I have heard people say it takes a while.

Can't think of any thing else, Let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked July 25, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_

We recieved your letter, and injoyed both it, and the news in the paper about the group of boy's. I do think that was a good idea if they could pull it off like that, and I hope for their sakes it turns out good.

It didn't matter what sort of paper you used to write on. You could have used a paper bag and I would have liked it just as well, just so long as you let us hear from you.

So glad you went to Myrtle Beach. I know it must have been nice. I hope you get a chance to see more of S.C. [*South Carolina*] while you are there.

Helen went home Wednesday, sure did injoy having them, and I hope it works out for you to come the wk you have planned, as that is when James expects to come. Allso Jr says he might come the wk end of the 15th or the followering wk end, so maybe [page 1] all can be together.

We got up 4 rows of the potatoes yesterday. And they turned out real well I thought. We got about 11 bushels, after having eaten off of them, and we have 2 more rows to get up.

But its so dry up here don't guess we will have any thing else much, so maybe we can eat potatoes. I mean it is dry an the crops are pitifull, unless its where the have irrigation. I sure hope it hurrys and rains. It is real cool tho, been [that *cancelled*] this way since middle of the wk.

Saw Jean this afternoon and she was asking about you.

Can't think of any thing else right now, so will stop.

Let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

P.S. Daddy seems some better if can only make him do like he should he will be OK.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 1, 1966.

[Enclosed is a letter from Helen to Irene.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter, and as usual so glad to hear from you and you seem to be doing very well.

I hope your new CO. [*Commanding Officer*] turns out good. He seems to have the same rating as Billy. I was thinking, so I hope he has enough experence to know how to do.

We fineally had a nice rain Friday night and yesterday, just a nice steady rain most of the time. Maybe it will help some things I hope so any way. Corn is to far gone to help, but may be it will help tobacco some.

Daddy, Anne, the boys, and I rode up to the peach orchard this afternoon. The main peaches hasn't come in yet, said it would be about 2 wks before they come in. They had some for eating and just using, _ but they were awful high, we only got 1 half bushel, and they cost \$12.75 for the half bushel [page 1] if the others that will be in later are that high I don't want them, especially as high as the sugar is.

Ammon you said you were having some money sent to the Bank, well that must be where those 2 bank slips came from, because 2 came here for you, and I wondered about them, but didn't say any thing because you hadn't told me so I thought when you came home, I would find out. The last one was \$40.00 I don't remember the amt of the other right off.

We had company this afternoon. Mr & Mrs Carr from Dinwiddie, you remember them, and Aunt Jerry, L.C. Geraline & Ginger. Sure did enjoy them.

Edgar went off to his 2 wks training this morning. So Anne & the boys are alone, but I'm sure they will be O.K.

I guess you saw in the Courior the announcement of [*word cancelled*] Lydia & Marylin's [*engagment cancelled*] engagment to be married in September. I don't see why [page 2] both of them has to get married in Sept. I'm afraid it will mean neither of them will get as many or rather as nice gifts as they would have otherwise.

I am sending you the letter we got from Helen, thought you might enjoy it.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Aug_ and may be we can all be together for [*word cancelled*] a while at least. [*Which cancelled*] With Helen & Family and Jr and you away from home and all of you coming in at that time. I do hope we can, [*word cancelled*] looking forward to [*word cancelled*] it.

I'm making such as mess I'm going to stop. Be good.

Lovingly
Mama

Monday noon

Dear Folks,

We sure did enjoy our weeks stay down there last week. Last Wednesday we got back to Vienna at 1:10 without any trouble or delays. We ate lunch after we got here and rested up a bit before going to the ball game that evening.

I'm sad to say that our L. L. boys last out in the ball games. They won the first one last Wed. night, but then Friday evening they played Annandale and they beat us 1-0. This was really a sad occasion around the Park her in Vienna [page 1] They won on an error which is bad. There is a lot of luck involved because our team was just as good if not better than the one we had last year. Everyone was just fit to be tied! But now we will have to go along with the

Vienna National team and hope they win. They won last Sat. over Manassas and will play Annandale in Fairfax tonight so we will be there.

I worked up at the refreshment stand Sat. Morn. because other teams are playing here on our fields.

Daddy, the negra man brought the money in for the tractor guess he wanted to keep the tractor pretty bad.

Since we didn't have anything [page 2] to do much yesterday afternoon after church, we decided to go over to the Zoo. We hadn't been in a long time and I wanted to see the new bird house and cage also the white tiger. The new bird cage is beautiful you walk around inside where the birds are. The white tiger is a beauty too. We left there about 7 PM and then got some hamburgers and came on home.

James got up the potatoes and they did real well, but everything else looks sick. This is about it for now.

Love to all,

J.H.J.K.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 8, 1966.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_

We recieved your letter and all ways injoy it so much. Glad you all doing allright, and just hope every thing continues that way.

We are as usual, I do believe your Daddy is feeling better than he was a while back, sort of perking up as you would say Ha.

We fineally had a wonderful rain Wed. night and Thurday, and every thing is looking so much better, (any thing that is) that wasn't too far gone.

Well today was my Birthday, and who do you think came down this afternoon? Mrs Williamson and Helen. Helen had sent me a gift and I think she came expecting to see if it had come, but I had not recieved it. I recon it will be along tomorrow. James found out that it was best that he start his vacation this wk. so they went on up to Mrs W. yesterday and will come on down here next wk end, so they will be here the wk you are home. [page 1] By the way Have you by a chance come across any one from up here in the last wk, James Riddle is down there for Basic. I don't have his address, but I gave Nadine your address to send him, so maybe he will try to get in touch with you. [*word cancelled*] They talk like allready he wishes he were home, poor kid. I know you know what it is like. I wont write any more will wait and talk to you. Hope to see you this wk end.

Lovingly, Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked August 10, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear everything is fine up there and that you'll have had some rain. We have had a lot the past few days and the grass has turned back green. I hope the rain you'll had will help the fishing up there. I haven't seen anything of James Riddle or anyone else, he'll get use to it, he's a pretty tough boy. So they figured to take 2 weeks vacation instead of one, sure they need it. Know you were surprised to see Mrs. Williamson & Helen Sunday. If I'd known it was your birthday I would have sent a card.⁹⁵ All the staff are taking leaves this week and last week to get rested up for when I will not be there. The LTC seems to be pretty straight so far, he doesn't say to much. Everybody tells me I can't go on leave because the SGM is so hard to get along with when I'm not there. Don't know much else. We are going to try to leave Sat morning as soon as possible don't know what time. You'll can leave the car at McKenney or wait until I call doesn't matter. Hope to see you'll Sat.

Ammon

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked August 24, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson Stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well back again, I made it back in fine fashion. Didn't have a bit of trouble with the car, it ran like a scared rabbit. I was sure glad everything went fine. It didn't take but between 6 to 6 1/2 hours and I didn't get over 55. There was no traffic at all so that 9 was eating up #1 highway. Didn't use any oil, it was still on full when I got here, got good gas mileage too. I really enjoyed the leave & seeing everybody for a change, sure did go by fast though. It'll probably take me a week to catch up, depends on how much my clerk did. The trainees are out on bivouac and it is peaceful around here, it also means I'll probably be eating C rations the rest of this week. It is pouring rain right now, a lot of lightening & thunder. I'm not missing anything, my TV is still here & that's the main thing. Next Friday is the big day for these people, I like to see it to because all the girl friends & sisters come around to the graduation, then follows cycle break and don't have to work but a half day. Got to go tomorrow morning & see about getting my car registered before the MP's get nosy. Can't think of anything else. Forgot to get some stamps while up there, how about using the dollar & get me some.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan RT3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked August 27, 1966.

Saturday morn

Dear Ammon_,

⁹⁵ This is surprising because her birthday was always a big deal when we were growing up. There are pictures of her with birthday cakes and guests. Perhaps missing this one made him feel guilty and prompted a change in behavior.

Its a little after 8:oclock and I went to get this off in the mail today so you can get your stamps right away cause I don't want you to have any excuses about letting us hear from you. Ha.

You weren't a bit happier to be home then I was to have you, and the time did fly. Every thing seems like a mogue [*morgue*] so still and quiet, no body saying any thing. Some times I wish I did have someone to talk to. When I am with some one I can talk too it seems like I have forgotten how to talk.⁹⁶

We are so glad you made the trip back O.K. and the car held up O.K. with good treatment like you will give it you can get some good use out of it, and I am glad you can have a way to get around a little around there. [page 1] We haven't had any more rain, but it is real cool having to sleep under blankets. Daddy just left going to get a part for that lawn mower. I hope he gets it. Everything else is the same, nothing new that I know of. Write when you can,

Lovingly
Mama

P.S. Raymond said Billy came by here yesterday and stoped by on his way to Ft Monroe, he will be stationed there. He will retire next yr. his Family was with him, you see his family will move into their home which he owns down there, nice huh?

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked August 31, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Got your letter yesterday, glad to hear everything is quiet up there. Things are going fine down here now. Last Tuesday after I had written the letter, Alvin Mayes came here. He was on his way to Ft Benning for OCS [*Officer Cadidate School*] School, he was driving his own car. Also saw James Riddle last night & talked to him a while. He seemed mighty homesick also he looked weak. It didn't look as if he had gained any weight. It was probably good he could go home most every weekend to North Carolina. He is in his 5th week of basic. It is really nice having the car down here. I didn't have any trouble getting it registered. I didn't need the statement from Daddy. I don't know why. Everybody compliments the looks of it, some man at the Restaurant saw the Dinwiddie tags & was telling me about how he worked up there about 25 years ago. We get paid tomorrow which is alright to. Can't think of anything else.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 1, 1966.

⁹⁶ In this age of continuous and instant communication in a wide variety of formats, we forget that social interaction was so challenging not so long ago. This is an instance of a rural woman in this era feeling cut-off from anyone. It was not usual to have visitors on a daily basis. Even though they had telephones, they were used infrequently here. Writing was done most, and it does not afford the same physical contact that a face-to-face visit grants. It is a lonely situation.

Wednesday night

Dear Ammon_,

Not much to write but want you to know we are thinking about you, and to let you know we are O.K. Just hope you are, and hope your C-rations arint too bad.

James called last night and told Daddy he has the little mower they were talking about, but that it was in right bad shape, but that it wants to look at it and see what he thinks of it to do so. So of course I dont need to tell you the rest. If nothing happens we will try to go up there Sat. and come back Monday, sence that is labor day.

How is your car holding up? I do hope you get a lot of service out of it. Just don't go so much that you for get to write to us. Ha. You know what? S.E. and Hilary has bought a new loader for the saw mill so they are after Daddy to operate it if possible, any way [page 1] he is going to try it for a few days and see how it works. But if it don't suit him or is to hard he is not going to keep it up. So don't worry.

Jessie was up here this eve to see if he would or felt like he could just drive the slide for him in filling barns,⁹⁷ but Daddy told him he was going to try the loader a while to see. He gets sort of restless when he doesn't have much to do.

I got a nice little Thank you note from Carolyn last week. I thought it was real nice of her.

Take care of your self, and let us hear from you.

Lovingly

Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked September 6, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Monday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hope you'll enjoyed the trip up to Vienna, guess there was a lot of traffic on the road. Did Daddy get the mower, hope it wasn't beyond too much repair. If I had some way of carrying them up there I could get mowers & other things for little of nothing. As soon as one cuts off they get rid of it. Everything is quiet around here with all these people gone. Lee has gone up to NC to see his folks this weekend. He wanted me to go but I didn't care about going up there. I sure wanted to go to the races at Darlington today but I would have had to go by myself so I didn't go. Besides I can see good races at Columbia Speedway, and it is not but 15 miles away. They really had a good one out there last Thursday night, they also had a go-cart race. Running that new loader at the mill shouldn't be too hard. Most likely its a good thing to keep busy. The car is still doing OK so far, I'll have plenty of time to clean it this week. It sure is nice [scratch out] not having to wait for Lee every time I want to go somewhere. I'm telling Ronald he had better write sweet nothings in the letters if he expects to keep up with Carolyn. I don't think a girl like that will be around too long. I'm still not to sure that it wasn't James & mines singing and not Carolyns that should have gotten the compliments. Write more later.

Ammon

⁹⁷ The term is used interchangeably with "storage barn" or "tobacco barn." It is where tobacco was stored after harvesting in order to cure.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 6, 1966.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_

We sure did enjoy your letter. It was so interesting. I know you enjoyed talking to Alvin, and I am sure he was glad to talk to you allso.

I feel sorry for James Riddle, even tho he sort of went around here right much they seemed to stick around in that certain bunch and he just don't know how to adjust to army life. I hope he can get over the feeling he has now to an extent.

And I am glad you have your car. It gives you something more from home and a way to get around a little.

You said some man saw the Dinwiddie tags and said he worked up here 25 yrs ago. I wish you had asked his name. He might have been a man that boarded here when they were building Pickett. If you see him again ask him his name, and where he stayed while up here. I sure would like to know because [page 1] [*word cancelled*] we had several here at one time or another from South Carolina.⁹⁸

Well we went up to James & Helen's over the wk end got back about 4 oclock this afternoon, enjoyed it a lot, and Daddy is getting the little mower. It is real cute and the Man had just got [it *inserted*] in the Spring, but he hadn't taken care of it, let it set out in the weather. But Daddy thinks it will be O.K. and that he can get it going without too much trouble. He isn't paying but \$110.00 for it, and it costed new \$600.00 In fact he and James had it running in a little while. But he does have to do some work on it. Ronald says he will go back up there next wk end and get it for him, on a pick up truck. It is too big to get in a car. You know Daddy will sure enjoy that thing. You should have seen his face light up when James called and told him he had it.

Well Marilyns wedding went off real well and pretty so they say. [page 2] Take it easy and let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

P.S. Helen and I rode over to see Eunice yesterday morning. She lives just a little way from the D.C. National Air Port. You know the girl we spoke of comeing for a while on Sat afternoon before you got home. Daddys sisters daughter. She seemed real glad to see us.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 12, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon

We enjoyed your letter so much. It sounds so much like you. I'm still so thankful you have your car down there to get around a little. We are are O.K. every thing about as usual. I just got back from the big wedding. Some big doings Oh Boy! I couldn't miss it for any thing. One

⁹⁸ This is an example of boarders from Camp Pickett during its construction and the impact they had on the families they stayed with, even years later.

thing I know some one sure had to put out, or will have to put out. It was a very pretty wedding tho. Ronald went and didn't seem to mind at all. He had some of his old buddies there, such as Maynard & Jack W. and others.⁹⁹

I saw Spencer & Carolyns little baby this morn at church, he a cute little baby.

Ronald went up to James & Helens and got the little tractor on S.E's truck yesterday, so Daddy will have something to work on now. [page 1] I saw and talked to Audrey [W inserted] at the wedding, and she was asking about you, and she told me to tell you she saw Ruth Anne a few days ago, and she was asking about you and wanted to know if you were still down there. Said she was working at Peter Pan,¹⁰⁰ but didn't think she would stay there long. She didn't like too well.

Edgar had drill today. He should have drilled yesterday but had to work as they had that big day at Crew, of the Southside Electric.

Can't think of any thing else right now.

Write soon and another interesting letter.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked September 14, 1966.

[Contents are one piece of lined Fort Jackson standard issue stationary with cursive writing and seven photographs from a Polaroid camera. The scenes are of the barracks, base, and automobiles.]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Got your letter and am glad to get the news. So the big wedding has taken place, well so much for that. Now that Daddy has the little tractor he won't mind cutting the grass. Probably won't have much to cut with the fall coming on. It's getting pretty dry down here, we haven't had rain in about 4 weeks. Cycle break is about over we're getting troops in all this week. I bought one of those Polaroid Swinger cameras like Helen had and the pictures are some of the results. Haven't gotten around to taking too many yet. Guess you'll can get a little idea about what it's like down here. I got the camera for a third of its cost and it's just like new. Be sure & keep the pictures. Glad to hear something about Ruth Anne, haven't seen her since Douglas's wedding. Maybe when I get home again I'll know where to go see her. How are the farmers coming along with the tobacco, slow I'm sure. Going to see James Riddle this week and see where he's going to ship to. He should get his orders this week. The clerk that works with me at Hq's is going to VietNam, he's the one I got the camera from. He has got a good record player & radio that I'm trying to jew him down on to.¹⁰¹ I finally put the curtains up in my room, I'd been waiting to get curtain rods but I have ended up using string. Can't think of anything else.

Ammon

⁹⁹ A reference to Lydia Ozmore's wedding, Ronald's former fiancé.

¹⁰⁰ It was a popular gas station that had a restaurant inside. One interviewee described it as, "an old-timey WaWa."

¹⁰¹ Phrase used to suggest bargaining or trying to persuade the seller to lower the price.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.R.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a underlined twice] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 19, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you by now? Quite busy I guess. What did you do today? I went to church this morning, and came back & ate dinner then Anne & I went over to the orchard and got us some of those Stark [*delicas cancelled*] Delicious apples. I hope they keep good like they usually do.

Daddy hasn't felt too good for the last few days, complaining about his legs hurting & feeling so tired, so he hasn't worked any in 3 or 4 days. [*cancelled*] Nothing different from the way he feels a lot of the time, so don't get uneasy. I think he does feel better to day. I guess the best thing for him to do is just pittle around. Then he can stop when he wants to.

The pictures were real good, wish you had sent one of you. I assumed that the building was where you stayed. [page 1] You didn't say, and you had that car shining.

Did you find out where James Riddle would be stationed? They have thier Graduation next wk dont they?

Ammon has anyone been down there from up here? Some girl called me one night last wk. and told me you said you were coming home last wk on Thurs. the 15th, and I understood her to say her name was Susie. Do you know any thing about it? I told Raymond it must have been a mistake because when [*word cancelled*] we got your letter you didn't say any thing about it. Funny how such things happen, but it didn't worry me, because I thought if you had any such notion I knew you would let us know.

We finished getting up the potatoes yesterday and got about 5 more bushels, which made about 20 bu not bad I don't think.

Edgar, Garland and all the church [page 2] bunch finished saying the church tobacco yesterday. I know they are glad. Yes the farmers are worked to death trying to get tobacco in. It has been real hard on them.¹⁰²

We had a nice little rain one day last wk. and it has been real cool, having to sleep under cover. It has been such a short [*word cancelled*] summer. I saw Douglas & Gloria on the Motorcycle pass by. I think they had been up where they are working on that road that goes by Diamond hill.

Can't think of any thing else right now. "Take Care" and write. Everyone asks about you at church.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked September 22, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

¹⁰² The statement corresponds with articles in the *Courior Record* throughout the summer that the flue tobacco crop was in need of rain, and that the drought continued with no relief. This would have meant a stunted crop and early harvest because the leaves would be turning early. The size and condition would mean a decreased value on the tobacco market and a decrease in farmer revenue.

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things are fine down here as it seems up there. Things are going pretty smooth at the start of this cycle, nothing much happening. Lee is coming to NC this week since they are on cycle break, he said he might go to Richmond also. I'm not going with him since he's stopping in NC. I may not come any more before hunting season. I don't know who the girl was that called you'll, she must have gotten her wires crossed. I found out where James is going, would you believe Ft Lee, he'll be going to quartermaster school for about 8 weeks then on somewhere else. I'm glad he was able to get close to home for a little while longer. Has Douglas heard anything else, If I was him I'd be sweating, since they're taking married rejects. They stopped having the races on Thursday night, weren't getting enough people since cool weather is moving in. They had a bad wreck in the race right in front of [*word cancelled*] us. Tore the cars all to pieces, the wrecker was carrying it off the track piece by piece. Took one man to the hospital with a badly broken leg, why it didn't kill him I don't know. Nothing much else to write about.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a underlined twice] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked September 26, 1966.

Sunday night,

Dearest Ammon_,

So glad every thing seems to be working out O.K. and you seem to be doing well. We are about the same, nothing exciting going on. Except James & Helen came in Friday night unexpected, but was glad to see them. I had expected a real dull wk end, but it livened up a little alltho I had to work 8 hrs yesterday, which I hadn't expected to do. But one of the wheels [*bosses*] are expected to drop in tomorrow and they wanted to prepare some what for him. Ha. [*underlined twice*]

Edgar and James went Dove hunting in the afternoon, but didn't have much luck. Edgar had Drill today, allso Drill next Sat, and Sun. I think he likes very well.

Was glad to hear that James [*R inserted*] will be at Ft Lee for a while a boy like [page 1] that it gets right close to him allways been used to doing as he chose to do, at least it gives him a little more time to get used to having a boss.

I went down to Josies this afternoon and was talking to them and Imogen said Douglas is only the 5th one down on the list of rejected married men to be called. So Ammon try not to be to hard on him when you see him. You know how hard it is, especially with a wife to leave behind. It will surely go hard with Jessie & Imogen, alltho I think they can take it better than some. I'm just so glad your time grows shorter [*word cancelled*] every day. I do hope if you want to, you can get some schooling when you come out of service.

Well Ammon I think Ronald must have taken your advice, because he has gone to Johnson City this wk end. She wrote him they were having a picnic and hayride up on the [page 2] mountain top, which Jr took us [*that cancelled*] when we were up there [*and invited inserted*]

it should prove exciting. I hope he has better luck this time Ha.¹⁰³ Just don't say too much about it when you write. He might think I tell too much. (I don't think so tho.)

Imogen also told me that Shelby Jean Martin, you know Ethans daughter got married about a wk ago, and married a boy who has to go in service in October.

Guess I'd better stop can't think of any thing else.

Write when you can and take care of your self.

Lovingly

Mama

P.S. I forgot, of course Aunt Imogen and Uncle Jessie asked about you.

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked September 28, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things couldn't be better down here and up there and over in Tennessee. That GTO is moving over night much highway it seems for some reason. Would like to have been there this weekend since James & Helen were there. Looks like I'm gonna miss dove season again. Have just come back from practicing basketball and will finish writing the letter. As can tell from the writing my hands aren't steady from playing. We have a game next Wednesday night, we play one of the other Battalions. So Douglas isn't too far away from Uncle. Well I feel sorry for him to but that's the way it goes. The ball was hit to him & he had a chance to go NG but he'll have to go for two now. I'm patting myself on [*word cancelled*] my wooden back that I came in when I did. With only 7 months to go they'll have to extend me. They're leaving down here like flies going to VN. The Major is leaving next week so he wrote letters of commendation on us there in the Battalion Hdqs. Since I was typing them I sorta added a few adjectives in some of the sentences, you know how it is. We get paid Friday which is a good day. Can't think of anything else to write.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 4, 1966.

Monday night

Dear Ammon

Sure was glad to hear from you and to know you are getting on as well as you are, and so glad you get a chance to play a little. Did your team win the basket ball game? Hope so.

Didn't you tell me the Major was retireing? You weren't talking about him gong to V.M. [*Vietnam*] were you? I hate to think of his leaving, sence you seem to like him. I hope you get another good one. How about your former Sg.? Is he still down there.

¹⁰³ She is referring to his engagement and subsequent break-up with Lydia. She's hoping that this time, with his relationship with Carolyn, Ronald will be able to maintain the relationship.

I heard yesterday that the Uncle is right behind Bill P. I think he tried to get a repeal, but Beulah said yesterday that she didn't think it did any good, he is in A.I. [*Army Infantry*] so you know what that stands for. I am praying for you not to have to go over. The Army is all right, I just hope you make it without that. Whats wrong with me? Ha.¹⁰⁴

I went down to Jerries a while yesterday and Beulah was over there. I injoyed [page 1] it a lot. The only thing was I had on back to take care of Charles & Ray, so Anne & Edgar could get out to supper, and I think she needed to get away from them a while. I'm sure they injoyed it.

We have a new family in the nieghborhood moved in the house down at Owen Tucker's where Jackie used to live. The man works at the CocoCola plant at Blackstone.

Boy we really had the rain all last wk and Friday and Sat was a Humdinger. Ronald was called to go out up to Altivista the water had got the Cable wet and they were having trouble. They [*word cancelled*] left here about 4 oclock Sat afternoon and got back last night about 8 oclock. Then left for work about 6:30 this morn and hasn't gotten in yet. Its now 10 oclock. I recon he will get in some time tonight.

I talked to Coles B. Friday. Asked about the prices of tobacco. He said [page 2] it was doing very well, but I allso heard Jerrie say that it had dropped off some, and they can't sheet any more after the middle of the wk.

A few people have finished saving tobacco. But there is a lot of tobacco still out. I'm afraid the frost will get it.

Can't think of any thing else to write.

You write every chance you get. And take care of your self.

Lovingly

Mama.

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked October 7, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wed

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things couldn't be better we just beat the 8th BN [*Battalion*] in basketball. We have a good team and after knocking off probably the best team other than us we should go all the way. Nothing else much happening. I had a bad cold all weekend from starting to play ball but am about over it now. We had right much rain down here too last week and it was really chilly over the weekend. We were going to the race at Columbia Speedway tonight, Thursday, but it's so chilly and had ball practice to. It will be the last big one of the season & might be the last one I'll see for a while. With the fall weather coming on I'm beginning to think about hunting up there. Deer season is in here on post now. Nothing else to write about.

Ammon

¹⁰⁴ There was certainly a heightened sense of fear that those men drafted would be serving in Vietnam, and possibly killed. Being in the Army Infantry intensified this feeling, as it was likely that your chances of going over were increased. The numbers of men drafted in Virginia rose significantly in 1966 from prior years.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 10, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter yesterday, and was very glad to get it, glad your team won the ball game. I know you injoy teasing the other team when you beat. I am glad you have something in the fun line to do.

You still didn't tell me [whch *cancelled*] which the Major was doing retireing or what. Saw Doug & Gloria at church this morn, but I didn't ask him if he had heard any thing. They were asking me about you tho.

This morning was communion service and I drafted Daddy to go down to church and help me get things ready, I told him I missed having you to help. It was the first time he had really helped. He did right well. We went on down early and got through and then I came home and dressed.

I allso went to the church meeting last night. Of course part of the meeting was devoted to money problems. [page 1] We will have our Church Supper the 26th of November. I hope you can be here at that time.

Anne & I went to Petersburg yesterday for a while. We didn't stay long. I had wanted to take back the sweater the girls at the factory gave me for my Birthday, so we went and I had it exchanged for another in a larger size the other one was too small. Then I went on down the St and got me another hat and gloves.

I brought Daddy back a Barbecu but he said I should have brought two Ha Ha. He has gotten so he thinks I should bring him something like that Ha He is a mess.

Ronald is taking a wk's vacation, and ("Johnson City here I come") he left this morning about 10 oclock. he didn't say how long he would stay Ha. But at least he has stayed around home for the last couple of wks. And he had put in a bid for apprentice cable splicer, so he got it, so when he goes back that will be his job [page 2] I just hope he makes a go of it. I know he can do it, if he just don't sit down on it. But he does seem a little more concerned. I hope he is. Here I go shooting off my mouth. But I have to talk to some one, and you [all ways *inserted*] seem to be one I could talk to in confidence. But he is awful sensetive, so don't ever bring any of your letters I write any thing about him in home. Burn them.¹⁰⁵

I saw Beulah and Betty in Petersburg yesterday. Betty gets prettier every [thing *cancelled*] time I see her. It was the first time she had been home sence she went off to school.

Guess I'd better get to bed.

Oh! I just finished cooking and wrapping a cake to send you, so will get it in the mail tomorrow if nothing happens. Hope you injoy it. Write and let me know if you get it O.K.

Lovingly
Mama

¹⁰⁵ Ronald and Irene had a difficult relationship. He was the child that tested limits and did things his own way. This caused a constant struggle between them. These sentences add credence to Edgar's testimony of Irene playing the role of "peace maker." She obviously did not want to cause more difficulties between her already strained relationship, as well as the relationship between Ronald and Ammon.

Envelope with no return address to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 17, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

Sure was glad to get your letter, and to know you are still getting on so well. Just keep it up.

And you all are winning all the basketball games; Boy I know it makes youall feel good. And its fun I know.

By the way do you all have an audiance? to watch you play?

I am glad you liked your cake. I'm only sorry I had not had a chance to do it sooner.

How did the Sg Major like his birthday party? I think it was a real nice [*word cancelled*] gesture, and I hope you all had a little fun along with it. I do hope you do get a picture of the Sg Major. I would like to see what he looks like.

Am glad you got you some more pants. Allso glad you didn't have bad luck when you fell. It sure does my heart good that you can get some injoyment. [page 1] Ronald has not got back from Tenn yet. Boy he must be injoying himself. I guess he will be home tonight some time Ha.

I had to work 5 hrs yesterday, but the rest of the wk end has been some what quiet. [*word cancelled*] Edgar & Anne took off to Winchester, and Vienna and hasn't come in yet. I am real glad they could go. I know the Autumn colors are beautiful, because they are pretty here.

I went down to church this morn, then after we ate lunch Daddy and I were looking thru some papers, when in came Erma, and a lady who boards with her. Allso Graham & wife [*and inserted*] later on Fred J., so we didn't get any thing else done. I was real glad to see them as I hadn't seen them in a good while.

Jean called me last night wanted you latest address so you might be recieving something else in the eats line. Before too long, you might be getting fat Huh? [page 2] All of us seem to be getting on well as usual.

Can't think of any thing else right now.

Write to us every chance

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope handwritten with return address Edgar T. Vaughan RFD 3 Blackstone, Va. to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US 52616327 Hq 10th Bn, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackston, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 19, 1966. Enclosed is a school photograph of Charles Vaughan, Ammon's nephew and Edgar's son.

10-19-66

Dear Ammon:

Am ashamed to even write to you. I have really let you down on the letters and goodies. The truth is that I just do not have the time for anything.

How are the Basketball games coming along? Know you are enjoying them.

Guess Mrs. Vaughan wrote you that we went to Winchester and Vienna Sat. & Sunday. Boy, did we have a nice trip. Haven't gotten rested up yet but it was worth it. The trees were

real pretty. Helen and I went to Arlington Sunday while Edgar and James watched football games and watched Boys. We visited 2 new 40 and 45 thousand dollar homes. They were so nice. [Page 1]

Also went to the "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" and to Kenndy's Grave.

Ray is waiting patiently for you to come home to ride him on the tractor.

Charles got his school pictures am enclosing one. They get their report cards Thursday so am waiting to see how he is making out. He has already warned me that he might not do so well on Conduct because he had been talking. He still likes the little girls.

I had a Circle Meeting here last night and Gloria came but she didn't mention anything about Douglas having to go to the Army. [Page 2]

Has anyone told you that Nancy Hardy is getting married in December and also Alice Hudson.

Am going to get something Baked and send it in a few days if things go along O.K. They are long overdue now.

Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Wainwright worked on the Ford, put new rings etc. in it. Boy, does it run good now. Will be in good shape for Hunting Season.

Ray should be getting new Braces, etc. anytime now. They have them finished but the Doctor has to send me an appointment to try them on him to make sure they are what he ordered.

Sonny and Hardy are still saving Tobacco so don't know how late they will be stripping it. By the way [Page 3] Sonny is working permanently now. Hope Jackie will be able to get on permanent also at Pickett.

Guess Mrs. Vaughan wrote you that we have new neighbors down at Owen's. The man works at the Coke Plant. He is 44 and his wife is 24. They 3 real cute children. They seem to be nice people.

Buddy is still in school to become a State Trooper. I had to laugh at him. A bee got in the car with he and his girlfriend and he hit a few trees and caused \$400. and some worth of Damage. I want to talk to him and kid him a little about it being a "honey Bee". When Ronnie left for Tennessee [Page 4] I told him to watch out for those "Honey Bees". He said not to worry he would.

Have you tried the new drink put out by "Coke". It is "Fresca". It taste right good.

Well, it is almost time for the mailman so must close and get this mailed.

Take care and write sometimes.

Sincerely

Edgar, Anne and Boys

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 24, 1966.

Sunday night

Dearest Ammon_,

We enjoyed your letter so much, and ispecially sence you seem to be having a ball Ha. You must have enjoyed the races and I'm glad, and I'm sure the Lt would understand. In fact he might have like to have been there allso. Allso hope you went to the fair so you could compare them with the fair here at home.

Hope you can make it home for Thanksgiving, but if not for Thanksgiving maybe for the wk end. (You know I dreamed about you one night a few nights ago) (not a bad dream) just dreamed I heard some one come in the door, and turned to look and it was you. It all seemed so real that I woke up and expected to see you HaHa. I felt somewhat dissappointed when I realized it was only a dream. But pleasant while it lasted.

We are all about as well as usual, Thankfull to say. [page 1] You asked how the Hay turned out, I think it did very well. Daddy was lucky Lewis Hardy cut it for him, and it cured real well and Raliegh Byrd baled it for him, and he sold it in the field for 75ct per bale. He [word cancelled] got 45 bales off the piece of land. I don't [think] that was bad do you?

Roy was over this afternoon and they went down to Roys farm and rode around I think they injoyed it.

I stayed around here, as I had to work yesterday, so I felt like takeing it easy, besides I had a few things to do. I did go to church this morn., Doug & Gloria were there. And Doug. has gotten his "Dear John," to go for a 2 yr visit for Uncle S., [word cancelled] Of course they are very up set about it. It will be nice if he can be sent down there. Tommy Stone goes in tomorrow I believe they say.

Daddy met me in Blackstone yesterday and we looked at some small electric heaters, and bought one [page 2] for the bath room, for the winter. We had right much rain last wk and it was real cool, in fact had frost, but not enough to kill every thing, even if it nipped things. And today it is real sunny and warm.

Guess that's about all I can think of.

Oh! "Kissing Cousins is on T.V. Elvis Presley.¹⁰⁶

Raymond is thourgly injoying it Ha

Write us another interesting letter.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked October 28, 1966.

[Written on notebook paper]

Thursday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things are still fine here, we won another basketball game last night. We have one more to play but we don't play it until Dec 4. We will lose all the trainees before then so I don't know about that game. So Douglas has gotten the finger pointed at him. When I read it in the letter I had to laugh although it's no laughing matter to them. Let me know some more details about when he goes in etc. I hope he can come down here to take basic. There is only two more weeks in our cycle now & if he comes in time he could be in the 10th BN when the new cycle beings. We went out to the Fair Fri night, it wasn't much difference from the one last year. It was something different for a change though. I think I've gotten a [word cancelled] warning from the MP's about parking to close to the buildings with the car. Sounds like the hay turned out pretty good and made a little money off it. I don't know anything else to write, things running kinda slow.

¹⁰⁶ Reference to a movie starring Elvis Presley released in 1964.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked October 31, 1966.

Dear Ammon_,

Your letter was enjoyed by all of us. So glad you are finding something to help pass the time, and am glad its basket ball. Allso happy you are making it so well.

So you think you have a warning from the M.P.s Why? Did they give you a ticket? Well we live and learn huh? Ha. Hope it doesn't mean any more than that, or did it?

Well I didn't have to work at the factory yesterday. We had to work like heck to get ready for inventory tho all last wk. I can amagine it was some what like you all when you have inspection. How did that come off? Or has it been yet?

Anne, Elsie, & Samuel came this afternoon and we all went on down to [page 1] Jessies and were together. Sure did injoy being with them.

I talked to Doug & Gloria. Douglas will report for Service Nov 7th, and that of course is all he knows at this time. He too is hoping he can come to Fort Jackson for his basic.

I told him and Gloria to be sure and let me know as soon as they know where he will be going. I just stoped writing to go to church to hear a missionary speak. I allso heard one this morning, the one this morn. had to have a interpeter to speak for him, he was a Spanish speaking from Equedor I hope I spelled it right, tonight this one was home mission from Va and he was so very interesting. He showed such colorful slides from Japan. We will have one each night this wk to speak.¹⁰⁷

I was glad Anne sent you some Cookies. I'm sure you do injoy things like that, wish I could get around to doing it more often. [page 2] Dad seems about as usual. One day spry as a cricket, and the next day sort of grunty, no different. The rest of us about as usual.

Take care of your self and write to us.

Lovingly

Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked November 7, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon,

How are you making it? Do you have time to look at T.V. these days? Or are you trying to get all the fresh air you can before it gets to cold?

Boy we have really had some cold days sence the first of the wk last wk, especially sence the Tornado. I am sure you saw it in the Courior. It was just like they said only a little worse especialy at the Factory. Because most every car there was [damege *cancelled*] damaged on that

¹⁰⁷ For many in rural areas, particularly Darvills, this was one of the few, or only, ways the people were informed about life outside of their area and particularly overseas. Although television provided another source for this, seeing someone in person is a more useful tool in retention and connection. Additionally, it was conducted as a part of the church and had attached authority as a result.

side of the building the ones that were not turned over and torn up the paint job was ruined and wind shields and windows broken. It all happened [to *cancelled*] so quick that you didn't know what was happening. I am so thankful no one was hurt.

I went down to Jessies this evening and took Doug your latest Address just in case he is lucky and [page 1] comes to Fort Jackson, as you know tomorrow is his day.

James & Helen and boys came down for the wk end. They were OK, and are planning to come back down the wk of opening hunting season. At least James is, but Helen and boys wont come untill Thanksgiving. And Raymond Jr called today and said they were planning to come Thanksgiving allso.

Now have some news that I sort of hate to tell. That is Warren told us this morning that he is planning to leave us the first of January. I sort of hate to see him leave he has been such a good Old sport. He is planning to go to New Orleans, for some more schooling, and will be connected to the Home Mission board.¹⁰⁸ Can't blame him to better him self.

Daddy went back to Dr Kirkland Tuesday of last wk and, he wants Daddy to come back over and [page 2] inter M.C.V. [*Medical College of Virginia*] the 26th of this months, which [*inserted*] Sat after Thanksgiving for treatments.

You know he said he might have to give him more treatments. We had hoped for him to go back to Richmond Memorial but Kirklands told him he [*he cancelled*] would like to have him close by, so that is where he will go.

Ronald has gone to Richmond to the races. I think Jackie went with him.

Take it easy, and don't eat too many cookies and get too fat. Ha. Looks like you are fareing right good.

Hope to see soon and write

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with no return address to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked November 17, 1966.

Wednesday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you making it? Hope you all made it back to camp O.K. Was so sorry you forgot your things that you had worked to get together. Any way glad we could get them to you. Was so glad you could surprise us and walk in on us. Only thing was sorry I couldn't be home any more than I was.

Thanks again for getting the wood for us. I had worried wondering about getting some.

Warren & Anne spent the evening with us. Sunday afternoon, I had thought they might go on in a little while after you left but they didn't.

I still haven't heard any thing about where Douglas is or if he will stay in N.C. [*North Carolina*]

Last night Edgar worked on his kitchen. He had asked Horace, Shorty, & Warren & Ronald to help him, so they went to town getting it done. They plan to about finish [page 1] it tonight. It should look right nice. Warren wasn't able to help tonight, so Gene Russell helped.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Associated with the Southern Baptist denomination.

¹⁰⁹ It is common for community members to pitch in to get tasks done for each other. Whether it was building a shed, plowing a field, or renovating a room most people extended a hand when needed to get it completed. This was

Nothing to write about now so be good and write [*word cancelled*] soon.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked November 21, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

So glad you all made it back to camp fine, and getting on O.K. I guess you all have about finished your cycle. Was sorry Douglas didn't make it down that far. He is taking his basic at Ft Bragg, and from what he has written home it is sort of rough. When Imgen first called and told me she seemed very up set. But I saw her at a shower which was given for Alice Hudson last night and she was a little more reconciled. Gloria was there allso.

And this [*moring cancelled*] morning she told me while they were at the shower Douglas called and Jessie talked to him. Gloria was terrible dissopointed. So he told Jessie he would call again today if at all possible.

Ronald said it seemed and sounded like he was training in the Airborne Division. I don't know for sure.

I saw Jean E. [*word cancelled*] this afternoon and she was telling me she got the letter from you, thanking her for the cookies, and [page 1] she really got a kick out of some of your foolishness in your [*word cancelled*] letter. She thourghly injoyed it. She said while she was reading it she would have to stop and laugh, untill Ada fineally told her if she didn't stop laughing she wouldn't ever get finished. I think you surprised her, with the jokes.

Edgar about finished thier kitchen and started putting the roof on the kitchen. I think he sure did want to finish it before the hunting season.

And tomorrow is the big day for the hunters. I don't recon some of the men will be able to sleep for thinking about it.¹¹⁰

I heard at church this morning that Spencer's wifes father was in an auto accident last night and hurt really bad. I wanted to call down to Josies and ask about him but you know how this phone is some times.

Oh! While I was telling you about Jean, I forgot to mention last wk was the wk she was in New York and she was telling one allso about takeing in some of the big [page 2] Broadway shows, and seeing some of the actors and actresses, allso some of the T.V. actors and actress. I think she injoyed it as well as studying. She was with some other nurses who was taking the same Post graduate courses.

I guess thats about it for now.

Take care and write.

free, no strings attached. People simply helped one another because they believed it was the right thing to do. It also served as a social occasion to get together.

¹¹⁰ Hunting in deer season at this time was a predominantly male activity allowing them to socialize and get away from everyday responsibilities. From November through the first of the year, nearly every evening after working or during weekends they would be together at their hunt clubs or houses. Many looked forward to it like Christmas Day and the first day of the season was a ghost town in schools and businesses. Although the endeavor incorporates the participation of women, it is still predominantly male and still very much a part of rural culture in Southside Virginia.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked November 25, 1966.

[Written on Fort Jackson Stationary]

Tuesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well by the time you'll get this Friday, probably Edgar has killed a deer with my gun and James can't even get a good shot. They're probably saying someone else has to take my gun to kill a deer because I haven't yet. But that's alright the sun don't shine on the same place all day. So come Christmas I'm sure there will be a few left for me to shoot at. Maybe old we will have something to say in the Courier column. So old Cliborne is finding a few muscles he didn't know were around. I know it can't be too bad, he is just homesick probably. These people down here get out on the 21st and come back the 2nd of Jan. So it's probably the same everywhere. I don't know when I can leave yet. Sounds like Edgar is really getting things done on the kitchen. Probably all work ceases as of Monday though. Sounds like Jean really had a trip to New York, I'm sure she enjoyed it. We have our big inspection Monday, and we're trying to get pretty straight. Will be glad when it is over because then no more inspections for me. The only other inspection was last Nov's IG [*Inspector General*] inspection. Can't think of anything else, tell James don't get them all.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2d Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked November 28, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter yesterday. So glad to get it and that your are fine. We are very well as usual.

We took Daddy to the Hospital yesterday as schuelled [*scheduled*]. He is in the M.C.V. of Va in the E.G. Williams section in [*word cancelled*] room 514. And I went on over this eve with Helen to see him and came back with Garland & Warren. You see James had come on down last Sunday, and Helen came with the children on Thursday. Therefore they had both cars down here so Helen had to drive one of them on back and James the other. And Boy! We ran into one of the worst traffic Jams I ever saw going over and comeing back. It was jamed from down just below where Mr Ritchie lives to the toll road. You wouldn't believe it if you didn't see it. So much for that.

Daddy said Dr Kirkland came in this morning and said they would start treating him tomorrow, so I guess he [page 1] will be feeling rough by tomorrow night. If I hear and as I hear from him will drop you a note. If I don't go before Tuesday night, I will go then or hear one way or the other, so if you want to and can if you call Tuesday night late or maybe Wed. night I can

tell you more. You can reverse the charges and then you wont have to bother about not having the right change.

Jr, Muriel, & boys came Friday and Carolyn came allso, so boy I have had quite a busy wk end.

When we got back from Richmond [yesterday *cancelled*] or rather last night we went on down to the Supper, and would you believe it? We raised \$12 hundred and 62 dollars. Right good Huh?

Gloria & Jackie went down to see Douglas today. He is doing right well now only home sick.

Edgar hasn't killed a deer yet, nor neither has James. Some has been killed in the crowd that hunted with them. Seems like they couldn't have any luck, much. So maybe you will get a chance [page 2] Christmas to Christen your gun. HaHa.

Edgar will [scratch out] prehaps say your gun isn't any good Ha. You know they allway put it on something Ha

Guess I'd better stop I'm making so many errors.

Write and let us hear from you.

Lovingly,
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 5, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you? doing real well I am sure. At least I hope so. We are all at home again at last, and I'm sure glad to see it this way and hope it will stay this way for a long time. Daddy is home. They called and sayed he was being discharged yesterday. So Ronald and I went and got him. They seemed to have given him a good going over. It was right rough, or rather it made him right sick, but he seems to be doing OK [page 1] now. He was sick at stomach from Tuesday untill Friday after dinner. Of course it was from the treatments and medecine they used. I would liked to have talked to the Dr. but didn't ever see him. I think he will feel better now. He seems to be feeling lots better even today.

So don't worry about it. I just thought you would like to know the details. They didn't do any operating.

Boy it is cold up here. I didn't get up until about 8:30 this morn and the tempeture was 25 then. That feels right cold after so much warm weather. [page 2] I heard Bob W. say he killed a nice Buck last wk. He came up to see Raymond awhile this afternoon.

There was a shower given for Nancy Hardy last night. But I was so worn out I didn't feele like going. Anne went and said it was real nice.

And did you know Becky has a diamond? I was surprise

I can't think of any thing else. I've been too busy to have any social life Ha. Take care of your self and am looking forward to seeing you before to long

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 13, 1966.

[Enclosed is a Christmas card with Santa on the front holding a Christmas tree stating, "HELLO!" On the inside the verse says, "A Merry Christmas To You – And Lots of Happiness in the New Year!" Handwritten is, "The very best and Merry Christmas Ammon, looking forward to seeing you and having you home Lovingly Mama & Daddy"]

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

We Recieved your letter and glad you seem to be makeing it O.K. and I can amagine how you and Lee must have felt when you went back to the car, and found out what had happened. Things like that allways burned me up too. At least you all do get out and have a little fun.

We are doing along very well, alltho Daddy seems sort of slow getting back in the grove [groove]. I guess can expect it tho. Otherwise O.K.

Edgar came in sick tonight, I'm not sure but I guess its flu or something. He just wont take care of himself, and here right at Christmas. He and Anne went [page 1] to see Claude yesterday, and we kept Ray.

When I got from work who should be out back of the garden rabbit hunting, but Wallace Cliborne, Sargent Landers and Mack Bradford. They had come down and asked Raymond if they could hunt a while, I was real glad to see Wallace, first time I had seen him sence he came to Crewe.

I went to Alice Hudsons wedding Sat it was real nice & pretty. Saw Allen Jones & Lois, they were in the wedding. They asked me about you. Allen said he sure would be glad to see you. I'll tell you more details when you come home.

Gloria, Aunt Imogen & Jessie went [page 2] down to see Douglas yesterday. I havint talked to them so don't know how they found him. Say Ammon do you think you could find me a nice Billfold to give Raymond for Christmas? I tried to find one in Blackstone Sat morn – but iether they hadn't had any or had sold out. Beat all I ever saw, so if you can get me one at the P.X. I will pay you when you come, as I wouldn't know how much money to send you. Can't think of any thing else. So take it easy, and hope to see you xmas

Lovingly
Mama

P.S. don't mention Billfold when you write.

Envelope handwritten with no return address addressed to SP4 Ammon C. Vaughan US 52616357 Hq 10 Bn 2d Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 16, 1966.

Contains a card with an image of the Virgin Mary on the cover. Inside is the passage "May the Spirit of Christmas which is PEACE, The Beauty of Christmas which is HOPE and the Blessing of Christmas which is JOY, Be yours in abundance Today and Always"

A handwritten message at the bottom is as follows:

Hope to see you home in a few days,
Edgar, Anne, Charles, Ray and Claude

Edgar is saving the deer for you to kill.

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked December 19, 1966.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We received your letter yesterday. Glad every thing seems to be working out O.K. and we will be seeing you in a few days.

We are doing OK, or rather well as can expect. Still not ready for Christmas. Will wait until you get here and maybe you can find us a tree, sence you will be here before xmas.

Boy it seems nice that I can look to you to do it. Ha.

Our Christmas Program at Church will be Friday night, and you will be here for that. Warren said good he can be here to help us.

Douglas is home, got here [page 1] Friday, I thought he looked fine. Alltho Imogen said he had lost a little weight. He wanted to know when you would be home.

Got a letter from Helen, and they had, had 8 inches of snow. Enough for the schools to be closed. We didn't have any to am't to any thing just a few flurries.

Edgar has been sick with Pneumonia. He is better now. He says he is going to try to go back to work tomorrow. Wont write any more will wait and talk.

See you this wk.

Lovingly
Mama

LETTERS 1967 SERIES

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp.4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked January 9, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

How are you by now? We are about as usual. So glad you made it back O.K. I do beleive that Gitney has more get up and get and more lasting power, than we give it credit for having, Ha Ha. Hope it does.

We are still having our nice weather. It is the truth. We had some more snow flurries one night last wk but none to amt to any thing it was too warm and damp for it to stick, and yesterday and today it has been raining not too hard, mostly drizzling. [page 1] We had the going away party at church Friday night for Warren & Anne. Had a real nice crowd and injoyed it very much, as Edgar had a list of things he wanted to romp on Warren about. (You know how Warren always romped and teased all the members when he had a chance) So Edgar [got up on the pulpit *inserted*] told him now was the members chance to strike back, and they really had fun telling [*word cancelled*] tales. Every one had fun and laughed. And do you know they actually kept it from Warren. He allways finds out every thing, but he didn't this time, other than Ray told him Thursday night (Ray says to [page 2] him Mr Rawles we are going to have a surprise party and

Mrs Rawles said Anne turned it off so nice that they didn't think any thing else about it, but then they were having supper with the Coe's Friday night and they couldn't get him to go any where till they had to tell him we were giving him a party Ha. Then he said he knew where it would be. He had to get [*word cancelled*] up and offer a little speech about how much it had ment to them having been with us. He allso told about the first time he came up here, and how Raymond allmost burnt his ears off, and how much of a good friend Raymond later became to him.¹¹¹ We will [page 3] miss them so much. I thought you would like to know about it and we gave him a going away gift of \$20000 Two hundred dollars right good I thought. We served Punch, & Coffee, ham bisciuts, chicken salad sandwiches [,] pimento cheese sandwiches and potatoe chips [,] cookies & cake, a supper what you could say. Wished for you. (and Daddy even went.)

I just talked to Imogen and she said Douglas got back to camp at 3:oclock. I told her you did too. She said he said he had been though the gas chambers, 3 times, sence he went back.

Don't know any thing else. Write and take care of your self.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with no return address to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked January 16, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recievd your letter and injoyed it so much, glad you are OK. and having you home sure was nice. The picture you sent was real good. Was glad you sent it, as I had wanted to see what he looked like, allso glad you all came out second at least. (In the basketball.)

I guess Lee was just trying to get back at you for Christmas. You can tell by that, that he was shook up from not being able to be off when you were at xmas. HaHa.

Real glad you had good friends [page 1] We are all well as usual. Nothing unusual. We have had several days of rain & cloudy last wk. Friday was right pretty. Yesterday it rained. I believe its beginning to turn cold.

Perry & Irene just came down and sat awhile. We just in joyed having them. They brought us some fresh meat. I know we will enjoy it.

I allso had a nice injoyable time [*word cancelled* – Thursday *inserted*] night. When we were invited to a Buffe supper at Connie Coleman's, where we had a W.M.U. meeting. We had a real nice crowd.

I asked Imogen about Douglas and she said they didn't know any thing yet. He has had to [page 2] go back to the Hospital for more xrays sence he went back, so he doesn't know any thing yet. Gloria has gone to see him today, and if she finds out any thing, she will call me and [*word cancelled*] let me know, so if I don't write any thing more you will know I still don't know any thing.

I didn't hear any thing last night so when I do will drop you a line.

Don't know any thing else so by for now. Write & let us hear from you

Lovingly

¹¹¹ The assumption would be that Raymond talked too much, but this actually means how abrupt or grumpy he was often perceived. Raymond's character was often misinterpreted. His intentions were good, but his social skills were uniquely his. According to his son Edgar, "If he liked you, he'd do anything for you. But he didn't want anyone to know about it."

Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked January 19, 1967.

[Written on Fort Jackson Stationary]

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things are going pretty fine down here. It is rather peaceful around here with these people out on bivouac. I got the cookies & fruit cake today and they are real good. They keep soft in the plastic bags which makes them that much better. Appreciate them. Know Douglas is sweating out where he's going, he should know something by now. These people down here are steady after me to re-up and go to OCS. I go along with what they say but what they don't know won't hurt them. The SGM is betting me he will leave here before I do, I think he is getting tired of doing the same routine here for 5 years. He talks so much stuff we have to laugh at him. The Third Army Basketball Tournament will be held at Fort Jackson this year. The games start next Monday, so will get a chance to see some good games. Today was a big day in Columbia with the inaguration of the Governor. I see on the news that Governor Wallace from Alabama was there, I'm sure he's in allied territory here in S.C. Can't think of anything else.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked January 20, 1967.

Thursday night

Dear Ammon_,

Just a few lines to let you know. Douglas is headed for Ft Gordon Georgia. Gloria called me last night and told me. Said he would go tomorrow on Saturday. Thats all I know right now. As soon as I hear any thing else will let you know.

Ammon I sent you a package [*word cancelled*] of some cookies & cake Tuesday. You should have recieved them by now. Let me know if you get them O.K. thought you could handle them with C rations Ha Ha

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked January 25, 1967.

Tuesday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter and injoyed it so much, and to know you are getting on fine.

We are all pretty good, Daddy fineally went and had one of his teeth pulled. The one that has been hurting, and made an appointment for having the others out. I'm real glad he has deciede to do it. It might make him feel better. Dr Couch did it for him.

So glad you injoyed the cookies and cake. I thought it might be a good time to do it, while you didn't have too much else to eat.

How is the basket ball tournament coming on? I know you injoy watching [page 1] the games.

At least the S.G.M. [*Sergeant Major*] tryes to liven things up a little by carrying some foolishness. I can see a person getting restless when they have been on a move for as long as he must have, then be in a place too long. It must be a miserable life to try to live once you have to give it up after to long.

Oh! Now for the news from Douglas. What do you recon? They are going to make an M.P. [*Military Policeman*] out of him. I can hear you now. Ha.

All joking aside. I am sure they could have put him in something worse. And as I told Imogen, I'm sure he will look sharp in that uniform. She said he said he didn't especially like it, but he was afraid to say any thing, he might end up in something worse. [page 2] The Fisher boy is allso in the same thing, and he will be down there allso. They are not in the same building but in the building right beside each other.

Daddy fineally got rid of the old hins out here in the Hen house, but didn't get rid of the Pullets at the wood shed. Garland took them. Can't think of any thing else right now.

Write whenever you can and take care of your self.

Lovingly

Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked January 27, 1967.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Thursday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Glad to hear things are fine up there. I saw on the TV that you'll might have had some snow. Know you'll were glad to see it since it makes things interesting. So old Douglas is gonna be an MP. I didn't think they had a clerks school at Fort Gordon just the MP School and a signal & communications school. He might like it after he gets use to it. Tomorrow is the best day of the cycle, because they ship out. We don't have much of a cycle break because the companies start filling Tuesday for the next cycle. I only work a half day though. You wouldn't beleive the trouble some of these idiotic people can do. We had this trainee in one of the companies, anyway he says flatly he wasn't going to take the final PT test. The 1st Sgt brought him over to see the SGM and the SGM wanted to tear his head off. So he talks to the LTC and returns to the company wherein he calls his mama, his mama calls a senator in Massachusetts who in turn calls the CG [*Commanding General*] at Ft Jackson threatening to investigate Fort Jackson for maltreatment of trainees. Therefore causing me to work until 8:00 tonight typing statements. The senator is that coon that was just elected in Mass. That joker had this place

jumping. I just laugh at it all because it's funny. I know that trainee better not show up at the BN Hqs because the SGM & the LTC will eat him alive.¹¹²

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 2, 1967.

Wednesday night

Dear Ammon_

We really enjoyed your letter. Boy I can imagine what a stir you all had for a while Ha. Things like that are what makes some young people a lot of trouble later on in life, thinking they will always be able to get by with any thing. But they usually find out to their sorrow sooner or later that things don't always work that way.

Glad you aren't made of that sort of stuff. I'm still proud of your decision, and I'm sure you are too.

Yes we are all about as usual. Daddy seems to be having some Rheumatic condition in that arm [page 1] that he always complained with. Guess I will try to rub him up a little tonight maybe that will help him.

Got a letter from Helen yesterday, and she is all hepped up about having their basement fixed up, to use as a recreation room. The men are supposed to have started on it today. I know Helen will be happy.

Ronald took off to Tenn over the wk end. Boy I think he had better get busy. He can't take too much of that, too expensive Ha. She gave him a Bulava watch with calander day for his Birthday.¹¹³

I think I told you about Floyd Ozmore shooting him self. Well he died [Friday *cancelled*] Sat night. And Hubby Riddle died Thursday [page 2] night. He had been sick a long time tho.

I went down to see Jerry Sunday afternoon after so long. She seemed to be O.K.

The men sold the church tobacco Monday. It did very well, but not as well as if [it *inserted*] could have been sold before Christmas. I think they said it brought about \$1300.00 Thirteen hundred dollars

Daddy had his car inspected today and had to have a new muffler put on. He wasn't expecting to have to do it Ha. We got you W.B. form¹¹⁴ and as soon as can get Ronalds will try to get them fixed up.

Its been warm and sunny for a wk or more, but the man says rain tomorrow. It feels like it. Write and tell us all the news.

Lovingly
Mama

¹¹² This is a telling set of statements about politics and race during this time period. This is a reference to Senator Ed Brooke of Massachusetts, well known for several incidents along these lines. It is surprising that a threat of mistreatment was made with a simultaneous level of discrimination going on in the Army at this time.

¹¹³ Watches seem to be an important sign of wealth or standing. They were expensive enough that most people did not have them. Irene seems to think that this girl and/or family has a high social standing in the community and is unsure of Ronald's ability to compete or provide for that type of lifestyle.

¹¹⁴ Similar in concept and form to the current W-2 used to provide federal income tax information from the employer to the government.

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked February 3, 1967.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Thursday

Dear Mom & Dad,

I'd like to know what's the matter up there the reason I didn't get a letter this week, maybe it got lost in the mail. I hope you got the last one I sent with the W-2 Form in it. Things are going fine down here, have been working only a half day since it's cycle break. The SGM got the word today that he is alerted for Germany. I haven't gotten the chance to talk to him about it yet. Hope he doesn't leave before I do. Lee is back from leave but I haven't seen him yet. Think I'm going to buy some fishing equipment to get ready for the Spring. Tell Edgar he'd better take a few lessons in fishing if he expects to beat me. I didn't [spend *inserted*] any of last months pay, so I have a couple hundred that is burning my pocket some. How is Tennessee doing, I'm sure the phone bill is a whopper each time. We have been having some pretty nice weather the last few days, hope there is an early spring this year. Can't think of anything else.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 6, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter. Real glad to get it, and to know you are O.K. I am sorry I might have made you worry by not writing the first of the wk. last wk, but the fact was I just couldn't seem to get myself to gather, and didn't seem to have much to write about. I'll try not to do it again, because I know how it is. By now you should have recieved the letter I mailed Thursday.

We are getting on very well. Daddys arm seems right much better after rubbing him up so much with Infornieb¹¹⁵ it seems to help a lot. We have been having some real pretty weather. When it starts up a gain to be cold [page 1] I bet it will be a humdinger. If there is any thing in the ground hog seeing his shadow.

We had company this afternoon. Aunt Jerrie, Uncle Jessie, Aunt Imogen, and then Aunt Rosa & Francis came. And they stayed and had Supper, I mean Rosa, & Francis, and they just left a few minutes ago. I injoyed having them.

Edgar had Drill again this wk end. Anne said they would have to drill twice a month now, on wk ends.

I've got to tell you a joke on Douglas I'm sure you will get a good laugh as I did. It seems like he is having trouble with that Sinus like he has, Well it didn't seem to want to get better. Well he asked some of the [*word cancelled*] Guys the way to the dispensory. He [page 2] wanted to go and get something for it. So they told him the way and where to go. So he sot out and went to the address they gave him. When he got there he had arrived at the WAC's [*Women's Army Corps*] Barracks! Don't you know those boys were having them [*self cancelled*]

¹¹⁵ Some type of salve, ointment, or linament to address muscle pain. This must a brand of some sort, but the spelling does not match any type of familiar company or name.

selves a ball laughing at him. I can see poor Douglas now. I bet he was red in the face. Imogen said he said the classes weren't too bad. The only thing was he had a time not getting sleepy.

I understand the boy that Patsy goes with will be coming to Ft Jackson in a few days.

I cant think of any thing else to write now. Oh! I can't blame you if you want [*word cancelled*] to get you some good fishing [page 3] Tackle. But I wouldn't put out too much money for it. Be moderate. I know you wan't to have some pleasure once you get home. And I sure want you too.

Take care of your self.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked February 9, 1967.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

70

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well it seems as though you'll had quite an ice storm. I know that type of storm does a lot of damage to trees, sure it was pretty though. Everything is going fine here, we had off today for Georges Birthday.¹¹⁶ You're right about the license plates, guess you'll have to buy them and mail them down here. Use the money out of my account to buy them with. We have on the drawing boards, a trip for this weekend down south. Will let you know how it comes out next week. I saw in the Courier where Patsy's boyfriend went to Ft Knox. The time is really flying by now, it won't be long before I get out. I kinda hate to see it come because I'll miss the people I work with. Can't think of anything else to write. I need some stamps with the dollar.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Virginia to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 13, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We received your letter yesterday. I can amagine the Sgm was dissopointed if he really wanted to go ooerseas, not to be able to after all.

The time is rolling on and before we know it, it will be Spring. A time I will be glad to see. Yes we really have had a lot of that white stuff. The one we had Thursday was beautiful, and it was so fluffy, another good point was it turned warm and its just about gone, but they are forecasting more of the same.

We [*word cancelled*] sure have a lot of sickness in the community. Mrs Traylor was taken to the Hospital and was operated on the first of last wk. She is doing very well, and allso Connie Coleman is getting [page 1] on very well she expects to come home one day next wk.

¹¹⁶ At this time, George Washington's birthday and Abraham Lincoln's birthday were celebrated at different times. We would now consider this to be our President's Day holiday.

Jenny Eastwood was sick all the wk last wk with pleurisy,¹¹⁷ but it getting on very well at this time. We haven't gotten a preacher yet, we have had a supply preacher for two Sundays and Mr Spain preached twice for us. I do hope we can soon get one. Warren and Anne have written and asked for thier letter, which is what he allways preached. When ever a person moved to allways join a church where ever they moved to.

Daddy fineally got some colored men to saw up some of the wood, which you hauled up when you were home. So we have been using it sence [page 2] we are having so much snow.

Guess you saw in the Courior where Bill Prosize was sent to Texas for air force training. And did you see the piece about Everettes Citizenship award? I was glad for him. I tried to talk to Mrs Hoover tonight to ask her about Patsys boy friend. I had heard her say he thought he would be going to Ft Jackson, but couldn't get the Phone. If you come across a Wray boys name you might look into it if you like, and maybe by the time I write again I will have the Information.

Can't think of anything else right now. Let us hear from you

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked February 16, 1967.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

77

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Things are going fine down here, nothing much happening. We had about an inch and a half of snow here at the Fort. It was the most in several years, Guess you'll had some to at the same time. They are really calling the soldiers from down here. The Sergeant that works in the Hqs with me got his notice today. Since the Sgt got his call and I'm leaving in May, the Sergeant Major said he knew he was leaving now. It would be a dull place without us. My inspection sticker runs out 28Feb on the car just have to let it go I guess. I'll be in bad shape when I hit Va coming home in May. I read in the Courier about Everette and also about Bill going to Texas. Can't think of anything else to write.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 20, 1967.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter and injoyed it so much. Glad to hear you seem to be doing so well. It seems like the Smg will just have to see if he can't get sent some place, or get out of service. Maybe they would be glad to have him in Vitnam. Ha Ha. Just kidding. You will have to invite him to come to visit you when you get out of service.

¹¹⁷ Another name used for bronchial ailments or pneumonia.

We seem to be getting on very well. Daddy had two more teeth cut last wk. and has another appointment for next wk. I guess with about 2 more times and he will finish. He has gotten on just fine. I hope he will feel better when he [page 1] gets them all out.

You spoke of having your car inspected. You not only will have to get it inspected but also have to have new license, had you thought of that? And do you want us to get them for you?

Now I can write you a whole letter about the Ice & sleet we have up here. It started Friday morning, and by yesterday it had become a humdinger. The trees are all broken down and some just down by the roots I decided I'd walk down in the field below the garden, and it just made me sick so many of the larger trees broken off and just about all of the small ones laying completely over. There is a many dollar lost in timber [page 2] all through this section, not just one but every one is faced with the same thing.

We haven't had electricity sence noon Friday untill today about noon, and if we hadn't had that old wood cook stove. We would have allmost frozen because with out the blower on the oil heater we don't get very much heat. I sure was glad of the stove this time. The telephone has been out sence Friday night. I don't know when they will git it back in order, as the lines are broken down, and trees and limbs across them. Boy somebody will surely have to put out a pretty penny to get them back in [page 3] shape. Ronald worked yesterday and today. He said some times they would come to places where the poles were just completely broken off, as high as eight at the time, down to two or 3. But with all of the distruction it was a pretty sight I just wished for a Kodak to take some pictures to send you. I think in all the sights with ice [I ever saw this *inserted*] was the prettist I ever saw. The maple & pines were the prettiest. The maple were budding, so you could see that little red bud down in all that ice. I hope maybe when the sun comes out and melts the ice some or maybe most of the small trees will straighten up [page 4] I guess Doug [*word cancelled*] Coburn will have a few pictures in the Courior next wk. We also had to drag out the old oil lamps Ha. I believe thats about all for now.

Write and [*word cancelled*] let us know how you are,

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked February 27, 1967.

[Enclosed is a letter sent from Helen to her parents for Ammon to read.]

Tuesday night

Dear Folks,

Received your letter today and appreciated you sending the paper clippings.

Honestly I have been so busy I hardly know what end is up. The men finished up in the basement last Thurs. It really is beautiful! I now have about a good weeks work to get everything down there cleaned up in the other part. Then my goodness if it didn't snow Thurs. night and the schools were closed on Friday. So I spent most of the day working down there the an left a box of [*word cancelled*] ceiling tile so I put it up in the closet. On Sat. we starting moving furniture down there we put the rug and old couch and several other things down there. We don't have

much left up here, but that all right because we want to start painting up here pretty soon. James said we might get a few new pieces for up here.

I had joined two other girls to give one of the ladies at the church a baby shower last Friday night. Ruth had it at her house even tho it was snowing we still had 16 there.

Sunday we went to church, then Joann came out to see the recreation room. Jeff went up to the Hobby Center to race his car for a while. Jeff had saved his money up to buy himself a [page 1] slot car. He was thrilled pink to get it on sale for \$9.00. I usually take him and one of his friends up to race about once or twice a week. Sometimes he gets a ride with someone else.

Today I had to rush home from work and take Jeff & Kenny to the dentist in Falls Church. They have quite a bit of work to be done.

Sat. before last I worked up at the Town Hall all afternoon for Little League registrations. Its about time for that to get started.

In Fairfax county with the price of school lunches gone up they are laying off some of the workers, so I don't know if it will hit me or not.

You talk about snow we have had more than our share. I am sick of it and will be so glad for spring to come.

Guess what – James & I moved the TV downstairs tonight, but he has to work out some way to run the antenna wire over to the other end of the house. He is using an inside antenna and its not so good. But its good to get it down there.

You didn't say what was wrong with Mrs. Traylor. You always mention someone in the hospital but no whats wrong.

We do hope to get down there before long when the weather gets better. Hope you all are well.

Love to all—

J.H.J.K.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

Glad you are doing alright. You said you all had a trip slated for the last of the wk? What kind? I hope you met up with some warm weather down that way, cause we have had some real cold weather and the wind was so sharp it just seemed to cut right through you. I believe its just a mite warmer tonight. Hope so any way.

We are getting [on *inserted*] very well. Daddy complains. I don't know if it really is something hurting or, it has gotten to be a habit [page 1] I hope it's the later.

With all the cold weather, Raymond Jr, Muriel, Carolyn & boys came yesterday and went back today, was real glad to see them. They seemed to be getting on very well. Jr had some cold, not too bad.

What [*word cancelled*] do you think? the teachers in Tenn seemed to think Johnny is doing so well in school that they actually wanted him to completely skip over the 4th grade and go in the 5th. But Jr said no, the could put him in the 4th and see how he made out and then they would see about it. Seems like we must have a genuis in the family Huh? I hope so Tommy seems to be doing [page 2] O.K. but haves to work for what he gets.

Carolyn seems to be getting on O.K. looks fine.

"The Eastwoods," Jimmie, Ada, Jean, Luther, Nellie, Tim & Mildred have all gone [*word cancelled*] to Florida for a few days. I guess they were glad to be going this wk end.

Yes I know you will be missing the people you work with then you get out of service, but thats the way things work.

I am sending you the book of stamps I already have on hand so I won't have to delay sending this off.

I'll send some more later.

I am also sending you the letter we got from Helen. I thought it was right interesting. [page 3] and you could get more out of it.

Write and let [*word cancelled*] us hear from you.

Oh, Gloria & her Dad went to see Doug this wk end. I finally heard from Aunt Imogen, and she told me – you see the reason I hadn't heard from her, was the fact is the phone has been out of order since a wk ago.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 6, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We received your letter and boy it was so interesting. You sure must have seen sights. I am so glad you got a chance to go and see some of the sights. I am sure it is amazing.

Yes it does seem like Helen is getting some things accomplished. I wish I could see it may be I can after awhile. And she seems so happy to get [*word cancelled*] it fixed.

We have had 3 beautiful days, so warm and balmy, after the cold. We are setting here now with the outside doors open its so warm [page 1] Raymond had another tooth out Tuesday. That doesn't leave but 2 more. I will be glad when he gets all of them out. He doesn't seem to feel very well, altho he looks just fine.

Oh! don't let me forget. Ada, Jean, Jimmie Luther & wife, & Tim & wife, were all in Florida last wk end and I was thinking about you being down there. It would have been right funny if you had seen them. They returned home this wk end stayed a wk.

We had a trial preacher this morn. I haven't seen any one since to see what they think of him [page 2] They seemed about in their late Thirties.

Edgar had to drill today. I hope nothing happens so we can get our Tax papers fixed up Tuesday night. There has been so much sickness I guess and first one thing and another, kept us from getting it done.

Aunt Imogen was telling me Douglas thinks he will be coming back [*word cancelled*] up this way when he finishes his schooling, going to M.P. I don't know the name of the camp. Its not Ft Meade or the most popular camps.

Don't know anything else, let us hear from you.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mrs. Irene Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked March 9, 1967.

[Written on Fort Jackson stationary]

Wednesday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well it seems as if Warren got off with a bang. Wish I could have been to the party & heard what was said. I'll have to agree that \$200 is a pretty good gift. The pictures that are enclosed were taken by post photographers. They were sent down to our Battalion where they were confiscated by me. There was a black man involved but was eliminated by a pair of scissors. As you can see the Sergeant Major beams with mischief. Lee goes on leave tomorrow for 15 days and that's all he talks about. I didn't get charged but for 6 days while home, so I have right many days left. I wish you could see if Gloria knows if Douglas has gotten his orders yet. These people go on bivouac next week so come on C-Rations. I have a clerk working with me now as an OJT [*On-the-Job-Trainee*]. He is a NG from West Va and has been in the NG for two years and is just finished taking basic training at Ft Bragg. He says he came to Camp Pickett last year for two weeks training.

Can't think of anything, you'll take it easy.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Ft Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 13, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon

We received your letter and enjoyed it very much. Glad you are O.K. and it is a good thing you are having your teeth tended to. I have a dental appointment next Friday and I must say I'm not eagerly looking forward to the date, as it is the one I have had trouble with, but I guess I'll make it. I went with Daddy to Dr Harris Sat morn. He just hasn't seemed to feel good at all. Dr said he seemed to be fine, but he gave him some pills, and I think maybe he seems to feel a little better today. It could partly be thinking [page 1] and feeling sorry for himself cause he can't get out and work.

All last wk was so pretty on up until this morning it clouded up and is raining now, and cooler. I stayed out side most all the afternoon yesterday with out a wrap of any kind.

It made me want to be planting some garden, but didn't have any land ready, and it needs burning off. Meade & Odie Jr planted potatoes, onions, & beets yesterday out here at the barn.

We had the same preacher to preach for us this morn that we had last Sunday [page 2] I wouldn't be surprised if they decided to get him. I think he might be in his 30s.

Douglas seems to be liking or adjusting to Army better now. Imogen said he said it wasn't so bad now.

Imogen & Jessie were up here this afternoon.

Now for the bad news, [not serious *inserted*] last wk end Ronald was coming from Blackstone and a deer ran out in the road Natuarlly he applied the brakes trying to avoid hitting him and swered around and [*word cancelled*] struck a jeep, enough to bend in his right hand door to his car, causing about \$350.00 damage, didn't hurt the jeep to amt to any thing. The law didn't [page 3]give him a ticket, sence it was unavoidable. But the sad part is his insurance is the hundred dollars deductible.

I hear they took Mrs Chandler to South Hill Hospital yesterday. Dr said she was just worn out, and they wanted to put her in there to treat her.

We fineally got the taxes fixed up, and sent off. And would you believe it. The money you got back from your Federal tax was just [*word cancelled*] enough to pay your state tax. Broke even.

We will get back some, not sure just how much, & Ronald had to pay some Federal tax. Thats about the story I guess. So be good & write.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked March 20, 1967.

Sunday afternoon

Dear Ammon_,

You seem to be keeping busy, and i'm sure you feel better that way. I can amagine it would feel strange, getting your seperation papers fixed up. In a way it makes you feel sad doesn't it? I am glad you are getting your teeth taken care of before getting out of service.

Do you know just yet when? I expect it will be getting pretty after while and you will be glad you can get out side.

Edgar & Ronald went out back of Edgars house and cut up some of the ice broken trees and brought them to the house yesterday. Edgar remarked it was just a shame the way they are [page 1] broken up.

Cecil just left down here and we were talking about license and inspection, and he said he didn't think they would bother you about your car inspection coming home, cause you would have your paper or card saying you have been out of state. So you needint worry. Daddy said he would get your license next wk. You wont need any thing right now but State license, or do you want him to go on and get the county license allso?

And you have heard Dad speak of Tom Vaughan over on the Turnpike. Well he and his wife came to see him this after noon. I sure was surprised [page 2] to see them. I like them real well. They seem so homefolksy.

Ronald hasn't got his car fixed yet. He is mighty anxious tho. Boy Easter is right here and I wasn't thinking, and I have an appointment with a Dentist who does surgery next Friday to have this tooth taken out. But Easter or no Easter its got to be done and the quicker the better. Its been bothering me sence Christmas. Wish me luck!

I wanted to fixe you a cake today but didn't have the ingredients to do it with so will have to waiet. Maybe I can get some tomorrow.

Oh! and Aunt Imogen told me at Church today Douglas called them and [told them *inserted*] he flew to Edgewood M.D. [Maryland] last night. So thats where he is. [*series of dots and slashes* – page 3] Can't think of any thing else right now, except we are all about as usual.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 5, 1967.

Tuesday night

Dear Ammon_,

I started to write and found I didn't have any stationary, so am using what I could find.

How are you? and does things seem quiet? Around there? I hope it will be so you can see a little of [the country *inserted*] before you come home. Have you seen Dwight yet? If not I guess he will be looking you up, as he is at Ft Jackson. And by the way, you have an invetation here from Clyde Townsend inviting you to come to Buenos Aires for his wedding "Amagine! He must be doing very well for himself.

I want to send it to you but I can't unless I can find a real large envelope to send it in as Daddy didn't notice, and opened it. Therefore I can't faward it. I shall keep it for you unless I can get a large envelope. I never saw one like it. Not that its large, but the way it is worded. [page 1] Dad hasint been any better [*word cancelled*] in fact he was feeling so rotten had Dr to come down, and he decided he is having some more colon trouble, and gave him some more medecine. I sure hope it does him good. It should if he will do right and take the medecine as he should. I make him or rather see that he takes it while I'm here and Anne comes up and see that he does at 12 oclock and fixes him something to eat. He isn't in bed, just laying around and getting up and going when he wants to. We planted some garden Sat. such as potatoes [,] snaps [,] corn [,] onions just a few little things.

We had right much company Sun. Mr Bailey & Mr Carr from the toll road and Roy, Christine & Oscar. Sure was glad to see them.

Do hope you can sell your car, and did you get your Birthday card from Helen & James? She didn't have your address, so mailed it to me as you could see for me to put your address on it. Take care of your self & write

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs R.H. Vaughan R.F.D. 3 Blackstone, Va [a *underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan US52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde. Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 17, 1967.

[Enclosed is a newspaper article on Rev. John P. (Jack) Moody who is serving as their new preacher at Sharon Baptist Church.]

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

We recieved your letter yesterday. So you are getting ready for your departure from the Army. "Good Boy! Not to wait untill the last minute, to get your business in order.

I was so sorry to hear of the death of Lee's [*word cancelled*] father. It surely must have been a shock to them. I thought of sending him a card but didn't have his address, and couldn't remember his last name. So will you give him my regards and sympathy.

Helen just called and wanted to know how all of us were. [page 1] She asked about you, and wanted to know if you knew just yet what day you would get out of service. I told her I didn't know. They were all O.K. Jeff is busy practiceing for the Little League ballteam. And she was busy trying to get the rest of the house painted. I'm sure it will look good when she finishes she & James are both painting it. She said just the drapes for the liveing room would cost \$75.00 dollars. They will be hot stuff wont they? Ha Ha. Jr, Muriel, boys, and Carolyn, were here this

wk end. Jr & Muriel both have changed jobs. I told Muriel I thought she would like her job. The [page 2] only thing was, she wouldn't be able to bring home any pay Ha Ha. She would be wanting that pretty furniture Ha Ha Jr has gone to work for the Dale Carnegie schools.¹¹⁸ He seems to like fine. He said he got fed up with that job he had and just quit. Maybe you needn't mention any thing about this part. When you write because some times Edgar & Anne reads them, and some times Anne talks a little too much. You know what I mean.

I am sending you a picture of our new minister. It doesn't do him justice. He is sort of like you he does not take a good picture. [page 2] Can't think of anything else right now.

Let us hear from you, and how you come on with your car sale.

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address of Sp4 Ammon Vaughan Hq 10th BN, 2d Tng Bde Ft. Jackson, SC. 29207 to Mr. Raymond H. Vaughan Rt. 3 Blackstone, Va. postmarked April 21, 1967.

[Written on notebook paper]

Thursday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well things are fine down here, only a few more days left. I get out 3 May which is on a Wednesday. I got [*word cancelled*] my orders today so I can go ahead and start clearing post. I'm selling the car for \$225 to the clerk that is taking my place. So I'll be riding a Greyhound home. Lee is on cycle break now, so he and I are sort of splurging. Since the license on the car have expired also, I am dodging MP's & town cops. I don't drive it off post unless at night time. I had a dentist appointment today but they cancelled it. It would have made the fourth one I've had. They filled one tooth each time. Nothing much else to write, will give more details next week.

Ammon

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked April 25, 1967.

Monday night

Dear Ammon_,

How is everything? Getting every thing all ready? Who is the new boy that will take your place? Is he a new one that has just finished his schooling like you did? You know I would like to see one of the annuals the new trainees get when they finish thier basic with your picture in it. Wish I could get one to keep of you.

We are very well. Daddy seems to feel better the last day or so. But one day he feels better then not so good.

Edgar & Ronald had a plowing spell here Sat. and broke up all of the land around the house, and [page 1] Edgar said he wanted to sow some soybeans, and I think that made Raymond

¹¹⁸ This is a public speaking program designed mainly for those who wanted to go into business, particularly sales. The company still exists today and markets itself as a corporate and leadership building course.

feel a little better, to see [*word cancelled*] something done, alltho its awful dry. We havint had but a little rain in sometime. The things we planted hasn't halfway come up, its so dry.

Anne is planning to go with the H.D. Club ladies on a gardentour tomorrow.¹¹⁹ I hope everything works out for her. Its allways so much pleasure.

I asked Jessie about Doug & Gloria and Gloria went to work the next day or so after she got to Rockville with Doug, didn't have any trouble. I'm glad for them. Patsy seems to like her job at Pickett, dont guess you have seen [page 2] any thing of her boy friend have you?

Let us know more [*word cancelled*] details about when & how you come home. I had sort of hoped it might happen on a wk end, and maybe Ronald could bring me and we could come for you, but the middle of the wk we can't, but some of us can meet you any time at the Bus Station.

Hope to see you soon

Lovingly
Mama

Envelope with return address From Mrs Irene Vaughan Route 3 Blackstone, Va [*a underlined twice*] to Sp4 Ammon C. Vaughan U.S.52616327 Hq 10th Bn. 2nd Tng Bde Fort Jackson, S.C. 29207 postmarked May 1, 1967.

Sunday night

Dear Ammon_,

Whats the matter are you having to big a time to write? Ha. Ha. Or are you busy getting ready to ship out home?

The later I hope. Are you about ready? I did miss not getting a letter yesterday. Maybe you had better call Tuesday night and [*word cancelled*] let us know just all the late details. What time you want some one to meet you [*word cancelled*] or do you want us to wait till you get to McKenney or Petersburg, and you call, or what? Daddy had another one of his spells for the wk end, seems better now. I hope he will be O.K. now. Imogen, Jessie, Etta & Wilson just [page 1] left up here. I was real surprised to see them walk in tonight.

I'll wait and tell you the news when you get here.

Hope to see you Wednesday.

Love
Mama

¹¹⁹ According to an interview with Anne Vaughan, this is a reference to the home demonstration club. Most of the ladies in the community were members. They met once a month and often went on trips. She described it as a 4-H for adult women. After further research, her description seems accurate. The government endorsed the program as a way to disseminate educational resources, particularly in the subjects of agriculture and home economics.

ORAL HISTORY: METHODOLOGY

Letters are a useful and authentic source of accounts of events and people. In an effort to increase the consistency of the material and further explore the themes and questions prompted by the correspondence, interviews and informal sessions were conducted with several people that lived in the locality or were familiar with the family at that time. The environments in these conversations varied and consist of recorded, formal interviews as well as notes from informal discussions at family events. The information has enriched this body of work. Most of the individuals that participated in or were mentioned in the correspondence are deceased. Therefore, the contributions made are all the more precious. Three of the interviews were selected for placement in this project because they show the range of diverse persons involved. One is the wife of Ammon Vaughan, provided as a second-hand source. Another is Gloria and Douglas Cliborne, peers of Ammon and close to the family at the time with both direct and indirect involvement. The final is with Edgar and Anne Vaughan who actually witnessed and participated in the events and daily routines of Darvills and are directed related to the correspondents.

As with the documents, every effort has been made during the editing process to preserve the words of the participants as they were stated. Only the routine “ahs,” “ums,” and “you knows” were deleted and nothing was added. For clarification, words are bracketed to assist the reader in understanding. Punctuation was placed based on the length of the pause. This aspect of transcription is widely debated because of its subjective nature. Additionally problematic is subject matter which can be sensitive and potentially upset family members. In order to prevent this from happening, the author has taken steps to eliminate minor passages in the interviews with Christine Vaughan and Gloria and Douglas Cliborne. Also, names have been removed from the passage on bootlegging as stated by Edgar Vaughan in the interview conducted with him and

his wife. This in no way compromises the content or message of the material, but is a precaution based on the individuals' inability to speak in their defense. It is the author's opinion, therefore, that all of these adjustments provide a fair and accurate final rendering.

Listed below are the names of all individuals who contributed in some way to the research and information used to garner insight and provide clarity for the project.

Robert Wallace	Cliffton Wallace
Jackie Powers	Everette Procise
Frances Vaughan	Edgar Vaughan
Anne Vaughan	Charles Vaughan
John Vaughan	Helen Vaughan
Ronald Vaughan	Christine Vaughan
Gloria Cliborne	Douglas Cliborne
Tom Vaughan	

SELECTED INTERVIEWS

TRANSCRIPTIONS

Interview Number One: Christine Vaughan

Hi! This is May 25th in the a.m. and I am in Darvills, Virginia in the home of my mother, Christine Palmore Vaughan, who was married to Ammon Vaughan – one of the main subjects of the letters. Alright...ah, briefly take me through a couple of things that I need clarification on. First of all, I need to know what a muskmelon is...

Christine: A muskmelon is like a cantaloupe.

Also, when they say they're spreading soda in the field, what does that mean? What does that entail?

Christine: It's just where they either put it in a spreader with a tractor or either a hand spreader and it – the soda is like fertilizer to the land.

Is that like lime or something different?

Christine: Similar to lime.

Alright, now that I've cleared up a couple of things on that, tell me briefly – or tell us briefly – where you were raised.

Christine: I was raised in Blackstone, Virginia on a farm outside the city limits of Blackstone.

OK, and what did your family do for a living?

Christine: Farm – tobacco farming.

What role did agriculture play in your family's life growing up?

Christine: That was their livelihood.

OK, so walk me through a typical year in terms of them.

Christine: Alright, well about January you start planting what they call the plantbeds, which is the seed for the tobacco. And you have to go in a certain area where the soil is really good and they do plot off and they plant the seeds and cover it with this cheesecloth-like stuff. And then in

about March they start getting the land ready to plant the tobacco. And of course, at that time too, we started planting – getting ready to start planting our garden ‘cause we raised practically everything that we ate. And so, you would plant like potatoes, cabbage, and green beans – peas, and everything at that particular point – onions at that particular point in time because you could plant those earlier than the other garden. And then in about April and May you go to the plantbed and then would pick the plants that they wanted to use to plant in the fields. That was an all day affair and after you picked the plants you wanted, then they got on planters and they would put the plant in the planter and it would plant the tobacco plant. And course the ones that didn’t live, you would have to use a tobacco peg and replant them. And then course you watched it grow, and then when it got to where it put out suckers, then you would go and take... pull the suckers out and top it and put this chemical-like on it to keep suckers from coming back. And then, in about the first of June I guess, that’s when we started going in and harvesting the tobacco. Course you go and pluck off the leaves-two or three leaves at the bottom of the plant each week, and we didn’t have the means that they have today. We had to do all that by hand and we had sleds that went out into the field, and the men would put the leaves down in the sled and take the sled back to the place where the women were tying the tobacco. So you had people that had to hand you three leaves at a time, and then you tied them to a tobacco stick and you got the end of it you had to tie that and then lay it in a pile. And then at lunchtime, while momma was cooking our food to eat, we would go and put the tobacco up in the barn so that when we came back from lunch we could start all over again. And usually we rested maybe an hour at lunchtime and then we went back in the field. It was about 6 o’clock or 7 o’clock before we actually finished doing a barn of tobacco. And then when you finish doing that and ate supper and everything, momma would go out into the garden and pick vegetables and can and freeze them and then we would go

to bed, get up the next morning and start all over again. Course once you cured the tobacco, we would have to get up before daybreak and go to the barns and take the tobacco out of the barns. And then you had a place called a packhouse that you packed that tobacco in and, again, when we brought one load home to do, momma would go in and cook breakfast. And after we had finished the one load, then we would go in and eat. And then you would go back and finish getting it, then you started the deal all over again.

Now when you say “we,” how many people are helping, like on a sled or how many women were tying?

Christine: Usually you had had about two tyers, four handers, one person doing the sled, and then there were usually about four men out in the field.

OK, so then the people that worked for y’all were mainly...what? Neighbors? African-Americans?

Christine: They were African-Americans mainly.

OK, were they paid...or?

Christine: Yes...they were. They were paid for their – each day plus they were given their meal to eat each day. And of course I had two cousins who came every summer and helped.

In terms of school, how did that [farming] impact school for y’all?

Christine: Well...it didn’t really interfere with school too much because we didn’t actually start, you know, doing the tobacco in until after school had started and before school let out, they had – the adults had planted and done everything, so the only thing we really helped with was like suckering it and, you know, harvesting it.

If there was a particularly bad year what would happen?

Christine: If it was a particularly bad year you went in debt cause you couldn’t pay your bills that it took to harvest the thing. But back then people were better about loaning you stuff we got

a lot of stuff at Eppes Supply and they were not pushy about you paying as long as you paid a little bit on it some sort of way. But we as a family would have to really cut back on the things we bought.

Did your mom or dad work somewhere else?

Christine: No

So it was always just farming. And did other people in the community tend to help each other out...

Christine: Yes

When their times were bad can you give me some examples of what you might do?

Christine: Well...lot of times people would kinda team - like you would go in and help them harvest theirs and then they would help you harvest yours. Or they would do things for you and not expect any pay in return for the services.

Did church have any impact on that type of system?

Christine: Not really...

It's mainly neighbors?

Christine: Um hum, because the church I went to...it was about ten miles away, so, you know, it would've been hard to get a lot of those people to come and help.

What role did Camp Pickett have in Blackstone? Talking mainly in the sixties.

Christine: Not as much as it did in the 1950s.

Can you give me some examples?

Christine: Alright...my family rented out to soldiers and their wives and families during that time at Pickett. The children, the three of us children would sleep in one room and the other room was rented out and momma had fixed it up where they had like a little kitchen and

everything too. But she also fixed meals for them and we had two other little small houses on the farm that families would stay in. And you became very close to them.

In terms of the impact on the town, what if any were there, I mean would you often go into town and military were present or...

Christine: Oh, yes! Very much so. So you know Blackstone wouldn't have been anything if it weren't for Fort Pickett.

A lot of people worked there?

Christine: A lot of people worked there and then the soldiers would come and buy stuff from the town too. And then course the town had to expand to meet the needs of the soldiers too.

In your house, the house you grew up in was actually right across from the railroad that was put in.

Christine: Yes

Is there anything you can tell me about that? The stop, the actual stop was in town right? [Christine nods affirmative]) OK, but this was something that occurred multiple times in a day that the train ran.

Christine: Yes...oh yes! And it would blow every time it ran and anytime that I would have anybody to come over to spend the night with me they wondered how in the world we slept during the night because of the trains, you know, so it's because they had a railroad crossing not far from our house and of course it would have to blow its whistle every time it came to the crossing. So....but we got used to it and didn't pay any attention to it.

Right what can – what do you think your parents' views were about work? What did they try to instill in you all in terms of work ethic and attitude?

Christine: Whatever you chose to do, you needed to give it 100% and you didn't tell anybody that you were going to do something and not do it. If you told them that you were going to do something, then that was your obligation to do it. You don't call in and say I don't feel good – you go, even when you don't feel good to work. So work was important.

Did they encourage you and your two brothers to further your education? Was education important to them?

Christine: Oh, yes ... very much so. But going back to the work part too, I had to ... when I was a teenager and got to the age I could work, I had a job at a department store in Blackstone. So that helped me to have a little extra money for me and to know what it was like to work out in the public. But yes, my mother didn't get to finish school. She had to stop in the eleventh grade and she always told us we would go to college, that it wasn't any ifs and ands about it.

And she stopped because why?

Christine: She stopped because she had to take – she was the oldest of ten children and she had to help her mother take care of the children and survive.

Is this late 1930s?

Christine: Probably – probably the late thirties and she had to go to the silk mill and work to bring in money.

And how about your father?

Christine: My father was raised on a farm and he was one of thirteen children and when he got of age, he went to Petersburg to live with a relative. While he was there he became a butcher and some way or other, I don't know how my momma and daddy met, but anyway they met, and after a long period of not seeing each other and seeing each other and not seeing each other cause my daddy was very shy they finally got married.

I want to, move your time reference up a little bit. I want you to tell me how you came to know the Vaughan family in Darvills.

Christine: I met one of the children – Ronald Vaughan – at a dance that we used to go to all the time on every Wednesday night in Blackstone. That was one of the big things, and we kinda went out a few times and then after that I met his mother one night and she was peeling peaches on the porch. And then he got hooked up with somebody else, so I really didn't see much of

them until your daddy came home from the military. I actually started dating him in September before I went off to college and when I came home in, um, December at Christmas time he gave me a pre-engagement ring and then of course we didn't see each other much because of – it would take six hours for me to come home and six hours to come back. And then in February, he went with me – with my brother to pick out a diamond ring and at Valentine's Day he gave me my diamond ring.

Harold or Freddy?

Christine: Harold...Harold. And then we dated for that – another year cause I was still in college and had to finish up and that fall in December we got married. Your daddy planned the wedding - all I did was get in the gown and go down the aisle.

This was December '68 or '69?

Christine: '69

So over a year – a year and a couple of months since you first met which was actually a little over two months after his release from the military.

Christine: Right

Just trying to get my times right. OK, during the time that you were dating explain to me maybe some of what was going on in the family, maybe things that he wrote you about, or talked about, or...

Christine: Well he would talk about Anne and Edgar and of course their children because Claude was born with that birthmark and was just not able to live at home. He was at Central State and that bothered your daddy a lot and then course Ray had cerebral palsy, so your daddy had a lot to do with them so he talked about what was happening with them and all and then what was happening with his momma 'cause his daddy had passed away. So he was living with his momma and basically supporting her in whatever she did and then he would talk about going to church and about work.

He worked for the telephone company in Blackstone.

Christine: Yes, he did.

When did his father pass away?

Christine: I'm not exactly sure because it was before we got married. It might have been, I mean, before we started dating. It might have been in '66 or the early part of '67.

Cause in his letters there's no mention of it, even up to his May release which is why I'm asking.

Christine: Yes

There are hospitalizations mentioned...

Christine: Right

But nothing about financial debt.

Christine: Well, he...he died in the hospital. They had gotten Granny to come home. She didn't really want to come home, but she was exhausted and they had gotten her to come home. In the night they had called and said that he had passed away. I do know that.

Do you know the nature of his illness that had lead up to the death?

Christine: I know that he started out with prostate cancer and then it got in the bloodstream – that it basically went all over.

Did Ammon ever speak of his role in terms of with his mother, what type of relationship they had in contrast to his brothers and sister?

Christine: Yes, he had a very close relationship with his mother. He was the youngest of five children and she was forty when she gave birth to him. And I guess you could say he was a "Momma's Boy." He stayed close by and he actually did some baking and kids started teasing him so he kinda backed off of that, but he was always considerate of his momma. He was always there for her. Matter of fact, we had opportunities to during the early part of our marriage to

move away to Lexington or Charlottesville and he wouldn't do it. He wanted to be here close by her so that if anything happened to her he would be here.

Because the house is only a couple of yards away from her house, where this house was built. What was his relationship with the other brothers and sisters?

Christine: He was close to Edgar because Edgar basically stayed here up until Ammon and I got married and about a year later they moved to Hampton. But ... and he was kinda close to Helen because Helen was like nine years old when he was born, so she considered him like a baby doll. Wasn't very close to Ronald because they didn't see eye-to-eye on things. Ronald was a little on the wild side and your daddy wasn't and Ronald gave your grandma a lot of grief and that upset your daddy that he would do stuff like that, so they were not as close as you would think they would be since they were the closest in age. And Raymond Jr., he was just so much older than your daddy that I don't really think that there was much of a relationship there, but your daddy would do anything that he wanted him to do.

How much time was between the two? The oldest and the youngest. Any idea?

Christine: Probably twenty some years.

So she had Raymond Jr. fairly young.

Christine: Yes

Tell me about Irene – that's what they called her – Alma Irene Cliborne. Tell me about her and I'll check the time while you talk.

Christine: She was probably one of the sweetest women I ever came into contact with. She was a wonderful mother-in-law. She never talked about people. She was very family oriented. She would do anything for you that she could possibly do. She went to church every Sunday. She kept you when you were little. She kept Sheryl until she got Alzheimer's and wasn't able to do.

And it broke my heart when she got Alzheimer's because her whole personality changed. She actually became mean and cussed a lot and that was not her.

She worked for the Levi factory in Blackstone.

Christine: Yes

Was she still doing that when you married Ammon?

Christine: No, she was not.

What was she doing after...

Christine: Basically just staying home and being a housewife.

Was she drawing...

Christine: Social Security? Yes

Benefits from her husband?

Christine: No

So just social security and that was it. So she did her farming. She did the farming. She had a garden...

Christine: Her own garden and canning and freezing and she even sewed.

Right. She made a lot of her own clothes.

Christine: Yes, she did.

And she was still using a woodstove to cook with.

Christine: Yes

And the bathroom was a fairly new operation...project since you came onto the scene

Christine: Right

So a lot of things were still...I guess you would call "old-fashioned."

Christine: Yes, they were.

Alright. Let me change my disc and then I've got some more.

So we've established the kind of personality that Irene had. How did other people in the community think of her?

Christine: That she was a wonderful woman, a good woman. A good Christian woman.

In her letters, she mentions some families that I know of that lived here and others are left out. Were there any families or people that she would have left out for a reason?

Christine: Not that I know of.

Can you tell me what, if any, situations existed between the Ozmores and the Vaughans?

Christine: Well...Ronald was engaged to Lydia and he went with Lydia for a long time and then all of a sudden Lydia broke up with him. So I think that kinda put a bitter taste...you know, but other than that I can't think of anything because Granny was related to Louise and Jennie Pie so I don't really think ... I just think that that with Lydia and Ronald.

You talk about family and there was a lot of her family that lived close by. Was the house the center of activity? Did a lot of people come?

Christine: Well Uncle Jessie and Aunt Imogen came every Sunday to visit her, but I understand that during the time when the children were younger that their house was the place that everybody came and hung out.

What was her role in the church? Did she have any particular jobs or ...

Christine: She was the person that did the communion every time we had communion.

Anything else that you remember?

Christine: Well, she was an active member of the W.M.U., well not the W.M.U., but the ladies' society at that time.

Did she ever tell any stories or did you ever hear her say anything about how things were leading up to Raymond's death?

Christine: Well, I know that her father didn't want her to marry Raymond. Why, particularly, I don't know other than he said he won't no good. But they came and lived in the homeplace so

old miz Vaughan was still living so she had to take care of her, and then course before she died she got Alzheimers and Irene was trying to do ... tend to her and tend to her children - and Mrs. Vaughan was very mean to her. She expected for her to do everything and of course Mrs. Vaughan was a very abrupt type person. So I don't think she really had much of a life until after Mrs. Vaughan passed away because any time her and Raymond were going to do anything, Mrs. Vaughan would make sure that they didn't get to go and do. But he worked for the state before he became ill, so I don't know too much other than that.

What was her relationship with the other children when you, after you married dad and you all lived here?

Christine: She loved her children dearly. Her children meant a lot to her. Everybody was living away but us, and they didn't come as often as she would have liked for them to have come. But she either wrote them or called them often. They would come and she would say you've got to help me cook and feed 'um and do. And I always felt like I was interfering in their time with her, but it was like she depended on me to help her to do with them.

Did she ever mention any concerns, regrets specific to her children?

Christine: Concerns or regrets in what way?

Did she worry about certain aspects of their lives? Did she have any regrets that maybe there were things that she should have done or that she could have done to help or wouldn't?

Christine: Well, I ... not that I know of, but since I have talked to Raymond Jr. and Edgar and all them - she never would stand up to Mr. Vaughan when it came to correcting or doing with the children and so the children kinda resented the fact that she, you know, never took up for them. She was very concerned – Raymond Jr. had a heart condition and she was very concerned, you know, about him and his health. I think she would've liked to have provided more for her children, but the means were just not there.

You said Mr. Vaughan's child rearing or the way he disciplined the children – can you give me an example of what you mean by that?

Christine: He was just very hard on 'um, I mean, he didn't take anything off of 'um and then, of course, when your daddy came along he was easier on him, so the other children resented the fact that Ammon didn't get punished and stuff like they did.

Because, perhaps, the illness...

Christine: Well...I think it's cause he came on later in his life – he was more like a grandchild than a child.

And what aside from him being maybe harsh and having high expectations for work and behavior of his children, what other personality traits did he have did you hear them say?

Christine: He was a very closed mouth person. He would ... bout the best talking he did was with his twin brother who would come over every Sunday they would tell me, and he would blow the horn up at the lane and he expected Raymond to come out and talk to him. He didn't come to the house. And if he didn't come out, he left. And Raymond was a very good mechanic. People would come, get him to come and fix their tractors and their farm equipment. And he didn't actually go to church, but he gave money to the church without people knowing about it.

Where did he work before he worked for the state?

Christine: I think he just piddled around here and did, like I said, the mechanical type stuff.

In terms of social class, I guess you would say, or status in the community, where would you think the Vaughan family was – specifically in Darvills in that...

Christine: Well, I think at one time they were very high – especially when old Mrs. Vaughan and Mr. Vaughan were running the store and they did mortician-type work, so ... and they even had a saw mill type thing going on. So at one time they were very high up. But I think as the years went by and everything and living ... I don't know how to put this ... living so frugal that they became probably just average.

In terms of the other relatives that lived in Blackstone, talking about the Vaughans there, like Donald...

Christine: Cecil...

Where's the comparative on that?

Christine: Well, naturally with Hugh and them they had their own John Deere company and then they had the Pontiac company, so therefore they were more affluent than your daddy and them were because they had an actual business going on in Blackstone.

So, if I'm understanding correctly, the power part of the dynamic shifted.

Christine: Yes

Probably around the same time that Pickett came in.

Christine: Right

Because these businesses - the smaller were shut down, but the business opportunities were there, so Blackstone was kinda the...

Christine: Exactly Right.

OK, I just want to make sure I'm understanding it right. Alright, I'm trying to think of the other category that I wanted to bring into this. It's just not coming to me at the moment. Oh yes, here it is. In terms of close relationships, both with Ammon and Mrs. Vaughan, or Irene, which families in direct association probably had the most impact or were the closest to the family?

Christine: Uncle Jessie and Imogen. Of course Douglas and Gloria.

Which were the Clibornes.

Christine: Right

Which were family – Irene's family.

Christine: Right – the Hardys...Charlotte Hardy and Granny were close.

OK, how were they connected?

Christine: They lived across numb...across from the church.

Were they related?

Christine: No, they were not related.

They just became friends because they moved to the area?

Christine: Yes, right.

Do you know the nature of what caused them to move here?

Christine: No I don't. And then, of course, Ada Eastwood was probably one of Granny's best friends and she lived, you know, right across the road, no right across the street and then they moved.

How about Josie and Garland?

Christine: Yes, they were cousins. She was close to Josie. They would visit each other. Ah...not as much with Garland as with Josie and Jennie Pie. She was real close to them and Jackie Powers momma was a friend of Granny and Ammon.

Mary is her name.

Christine: Right, right. Mary Powers.

Now she mentions Garland a lot, would that then be because...

Christine: He was the head deacon in the church.

OK, so maybe he was viewed as having a lot of power in the community, and he was well-respected?

Christine: Yes

OK, what was the relationship with the Moores?

Christine: Well, they were neighbors you know, and Mrs. Moore and Granny were in the Women's Club together. Plus the children associated some with each other.

And Ammon was particularly close to one of the children...

Christine: Marianne – they were childhood buddies. They played together all the time and even when they got up they dated and then of course she went off to college and...changed and that did it for your daddy. He probably, maybe would've married her if it hadn't been for that.

Now unlike some boys – particularly with the sixties – he was very involved in church.

Christine: Yes

Explain to me how that, evolved over time.

Christine: Well, when I married your daddy I knew that I had to join Sharon, his church, because he would not change to my church. And I knew that in order for a family to make it they needed to be going to the same church, you know you didn't split up. And after we were married, I guess a couple of years, he became a deacon in the church. And later he became chairman of the deacons. But every weekend that came he cut the grass down there and he – anything that needed to be done at that church – your daddy was there to do it.

Why do you think that is?

Christine: I think the love of the church and the love of God and he just....it was something he wanted to do.

Do you think that any of that was the influence that his mother had over him when he was younger? To help with communion...

Christine: Oh, yes. Right. Yeah.

Things like that - when you said you knew he wouldn't change, why...why did you just know?

Christine: Because he was so strong on being a Baptist. He thought the Baptists were...better than the Methodists.

Did he ever explain that?

Christine: No

That's just pretty much what he would tell you?

Christine: Yes

Were there any other issues that he felt as strongly about?

Christine: Living here...by his momma.

So family and being part of the community...

Christine: And his children. His children – he was crazy about. They were his life.

Aside from Marianne and what happened there, who were his closest friends at the time when he was in service?

Christine: Probably Gloria and Douglas...and then there was somebody who was in service with him. I can't remember now that he became close with.

Are you thinking of Lee?

Christine: No

Was his name Lee?

Christine: Yeah...I believe it was Lee. It was.

Did dad ever say anything about him?

Christine: Not a whole lot other than they were in service together and he...you know I think he came one time after we got married.

Did he ever talk about his experience at Fort Jackson?

Christine: Yeah...he had it made in the shade. He was the secretary to the company commander and course he...and the reason was because he was so good at typing and because they knew they could depend on him. They did not want him to leave. And he got an award for his loyalty and his duties and he said that he – a lot of times every morning they would go and get, um, sweetcakes. That was one of his jobs was to go to the commissary and get sweetcakes. So he put on a lot of weight while he was in the service.

Now by sweetcakes you mean like honeybuns and donuts and stuff like that?

Christine: Nope...cakes that they had made.

Like little mini cakes?

Christine: No...I think they were more than mini cakes – like pans.

OK...did he say anything else about the things he got to do while he was there?

Christine: No, he didn't say anything, but he did like his company commander. He was close to him.

And in terms of cars – he had one that he got rid of before he got out. How important was the automobile, not just for him, but for most guys?

Christine: Oh, the cars were everything.

That was everything?

Christine: Yes

Explain that.

Christine: Well, they really took care of their cars and they wanted their cars to be in top notch condition. [Of] course your Uncle Ronald used to race his. That was one thing that upset your Granny. But I don't know...they just - it was important to have a car of your own.

I guess you could say ... taking drives or cruising and that was probably a major form of entertainment at that time?

Christine: Yes

What was he driving when you met him?

Christine: Le Mans...a Pontiac Le Mans. It was green and black.

And was that – had he bought that new?

Christine: Yes

From the Vaughans?

Christine: Yes

And I guess it was because he was actually working for the telephone company before he left for the military. So he had a job waiting for him?

Christine: When he came back...right.

Can you tell me real briefly his relationship to that workplace?

Christine: He was very dedicated to his job. He didn't agree with all the men and their ways, you know, but he didn't buck the system by any means. He made sure he was at work by 8 o'clock – rain, snow, hell, whatever. And ... he enjoyed doing what he did.

Anything else that you can think of that might be relevant to understanding either Ammon or Irene or both of them together?

Christine: Well, I have to be honest that one time I was jealous of his mother because he just was so crazy about her and doing for her. But then after I understood, you know, that she just meant so much to him then it didn't bother me, you know, anymore but the time that – when he'd get off from work he'd stop before he came home. When he went to work, he'd stop before he got to work. So I mean - he definitely was a dedicated son to her. And I think she felt just as strongly about him, but she was very careful not to show it with her other kids.

That's it...anything else you can think of?

[Long pause]

Christine: I know it broke his heart when he had to put her in the nursing home. And he would go and visit her every Sunday and I can remember one night sitting at the table eating and they had called and said that they had to put her in the hospital but she wasn't doing well - and that's the first time I ever saw him cry.

I remember that as well.

Christine: Because he thought that she was going to die.

Well...I thank you and I'll get back to you if I have more questions.

Christine: Yes m'am.

Interview Number Two: Douglas and Gloria Cliborne

Alright it is Monday, June 7 and I am in the home of Gloria and Douglas Cliborne which is a McKenney address, but is also just outside of Darvills, Virginia the area which we're studying here.

I need to throw some names at you. These are people identified in letters that I don't know, so if you know the identity of any of them...let me know.

One of them is Ed Morgan...ring a bell?

Gloria: No

Elmore Boisseau

Gloria: Name sounds familiar, but I don't know...

Douglas: Elmore Boisseau?

Gloria: Oh yes

Douglas: Yeah we knew ah...we went to school with him...he was from McKenney

OK ... it talks about graduation with Sandy Wynn.

Gloria: Sandra Wynn

And an auto accident...

Gloria and Douglas: Yes Yes

OK, so he was a classmate?

Douglas: He was ...

Gloria: He was one grade ahead of us.

Douglas: He was one grade ahead of me and he was with Sandra and I think he was killed in an automobile accident. I think it was probably a few years after we graduated.

Gloria: His father was my mail carrier. Yes

Ann Rawls...

Gloria: Yes

Douglas: That was ...

Gloria: That was our pastor's wife.

Warren?

[Gloria shakes head in affirmation]

Douglas: Warren Rawls

Some of them are pretty easy, but some of them...OK she mentions a Bill and Rosalyn Coleman, that's Rose right?

Gloria: Yes

Pamela's their daughter?

[Gloria shakes head in affirmation]

Virginia Daniel...

[Long Pause – no answer]

Linda Sue....how does she factor in?

Douglas: She...

Gloria: She was a class below me...she was Owen Tucker's daughter from Darvills.

OK - Corling Riddle...

Douglas: Riddle?

Well, it's spelled C-O-R-L-I-N-G...

Douglas: They had a child die at Charlotte's...

Gloria: What does it say in the diary?

Well the context is the telephone man came to move the box on last Friday – Raymond got Corling Riddle's truck to get the lawn mower yesterday.

Gloria: Don't know that one.

Thomas Cousins?

Douglas: He was a black guy....I think he used to do either side work or contract work.

Gloria: Were these letters that Ammon wrote when he was in the military?

*Yes, many as you can see [holding up transcriptions folder]. I've transcribed a lot.
Ah....Judy Taylor...*

Douglas: That was...[looks over at Gloria and asks, "What's that one down there?"]

Gloria: That's Claudene Taylor's daughter. Yeah. She was a grade or two below me. And she was also a cheerleader when I was cheerleading.

*That might be the majority of them. [Names]
No, Linda Bishop...*

Douglas: That was...

Gloria: Cabell's

Douglas: That was Cole's daughter, Bruce's first cousin. They lived down across from Claude Townsend... turn there and go back in there.

Hayes Poythress

Douglas: OK they...he lived over there – you go past Spencer Wallace's – go on back down that way 2 or 3 miles – lived on the left. His son was Dean Poythress which was one year ahead of Ammon and myself.

So they lived in the community a right good while.

Douglas: Yeah...then they moved to South Hill.

Tom and Cecilia Edmonds

Douglas: They lived before you get to McKenney on the right, you go past Max Roberts Lawn Center, next house on the right.

John's grandparents?

Gloria: Yeah...it's across from John's grandparents.

That I can understand.

Gloria: Yeah...and see Michelle lives on the other side – Michelle and John.

Douglas: Cecilia was born in Darvills.

Gloria: She was a Powers.

Douglas: Hart Powers

Related to Jackie?

Douglas: First Cousins

Gloria: Yeah

Oh...a Jane and Susan

Gloria: Jane is Jane Powers probably, that married Jackie – I mean married Sonny Powers. And Susan is Jane's sister – Susan Stone. That's probably what they're talking about.

*A Mr. and Mrs. Warden [Long pause – no response]
Clarence McKissick?*

Douglas: Yeah...the uh

Gloria: That's [unclear] house.

Douglas: If you go up before Darvills, the first road on the right, that you get, that you get out on forty here, go up to the first road on the right....

Gloria: Where the goat farm is.

OK

Douglas: Take a left and the next road to the left – McKissick's place is all the way back and the end of the road. Mark and Beth Winters live in the house now.

Gloria: It's an older house, built back in – many years ago.

So they lived in the community for awhile?

[Both shake heads in affirmation.]

Mrs. Hoover...

Douglas: They ran the Darvills store there for some years.

Gloria: That's Nancy's mother. That's Patsy Rae.

I think I might vaguely remember Patsy.

Gloria: She's now retired.

Douglas: I think the Hoover's ... I'm not sure they ran it before Parker or after Parker.

Gloria: It was before Parker.

Ronnie Gooch

Douglas: That's ...Thelma Gooch's son, which is probably your third or fourth cousin.

Connected to who?

Douglas: Uh...

Gloria: Mr. Echols

Douglas: Harry Echols

Gloria: Grandfather

Douglas: [Looks over at Gloria] What was his wife's name?

Gloria: Emily?

Douglas: Aunt Emily...Echols...She was a Cliborne.

Gloria: And see Ronnie's mother was Thelma.

Howard Thompkins?

Douglas: Howard Thompkins? [Shakes his head no.]

Uh...there's talk of a Gammon. A girl that sang at church. That's how she's referred to, "The Gammon Girl."

Gloria: Karen?

Douglas: I don't know whether...can't remember if Karen sang or not. Karen...Janie...Oh

Gloria: They all sung.

So it could have been one of them – we just don't know which one?
Jack Loftis?

Douglas: Jack Loftis was also related to you, um, a distant cousin. He lived a little bit past Baltimore Corner. On the right. He was blind. He was a farmer...blind...blinded in his younger years. And he continued farming even after he was blind.

I can't imagine that.

Gloria: Me either.

Douglas: I've seen him crawl around on a load of tobacco, when he was hauling tobacco for my dad. He'd just crawl around on the load of tobacco and just feelin', he could tell just by feelin' [gestures].

And this was a Cliborne relation?

Douglas: Well, he was related.

OK. There's a reference to the Gentrys.

Douglas: Gentrys

It says we've gotten the Gentrys to come and started to drilling.

Gloria: That's a well.

Douglas: Gentrys of Petersburg. Right there off of 226 near the rock quarry they've got a well digging and septic tank system.

Gene Russell?

Douglas: Used to be a state police. Yeah, he went to McKenney Church. He also uh...

Gloria: He went to Sharon.

Douglas: He went to Sharon Church.

Gloria: He and his wife. She played the piano.

Douglas: This was back when Edgar was living here.

Right...there's also a Conroy or Condroy.

Douglas: I don't know about that.

It says "You know she was Mrs. Coleman's mother."

Douglas: [Shakes his head no.]

OK, now here's something I don't get. There's a reference in here to a Doc Cliborne dying...

Douglas: That was, um, Garland Cliborne's brother.

Gloria: Lois

Douglas: Lois Cliborne's father.

Gloria: Mary Lou...Mary Lee....Mary Lee was his wife. They lived out here...

*I just knew it wasn't you [pointing at Douglas "Doc" Cliborne on the couch].
Alright....Lawrence Ward.*

Douglas: Lawrence Ward? [seems puzzled]

I think that might be just about it. Most of them are from the earlier sections. OK... well that helps me. Kinda gets a few more players in the game. You can see the letters that we're talking about here [holds up folder of letters] between dad and Irene; and there's about 200 pages worth from what I've read and a couple of them are from y'all too. They're from when he was in service and the area we're dealing with here primarily is from 1965 to 1967- and a lot of references are made to y'all as well as to Jessie and Imogen, so what I want to try to do for the purposes of being precise is to get some concrete answers about some things. It's one thing for me think of it and try to remember it, but what you remember isn't always what happened.

Gloria: Right...

So...

Gloria: I told your mom, our memory's not the best either and remembering back to the 1960s, you know, is ...we'll pull at it.

Well, it's not going to be obscure...I think these things are going to be easy for you to remember. Gloria...I'm going to start with you. Just real briefly for the purposes of this, kinda walk us through how you knew Doc and Dad and got connected with the Clibornes and Vaughans.

Gloria: Well, I was – because I was going to the same school as they went to, and I went to McKenney Baptist Church and Douglas started coming down to church, I guess he was smitten with me then (laughs). So he started coming to Wednesday night prayer meetings when I was going to church, and I think he would come some Sundays – Sunday nights – Sunday night services...

Douglas: Some of the services...

Gloria: And then that's how I got to really meet Douglas and started dating him. And that's how I got to be close to Ammon. And not only was I close to Ammon, I was close to Aunt Irene and Raymond because Douglas went to Vietnam during that time - and Ammon was just real good to check on me and make sure I was OK, would follow me home sometimes from up there. I'd gone up there to be with Irene and Raymond. And just [at] certain times through the time that Douglas was gone, you know Ammon would include me with being up there with them. So that's – that's how I got close to Ammon.

Douglas: That was a time when Raymond became sick.

Gloria: He had gotten cancer and I went to see him in the hospital. Several times, and, uh, then Ammon started dating your mom and I got close to your mom through Ammon. And I was asked to be in their wedding. "And were you in it?" [asking Douglas] I think I...I was the only one in it and from then on it just, our friendship grew and grew and you know we had you and Wendy just three days apart. So...it's just been a, not only a family, but a friendship from day one.

And Doc, you are related to Dad, to Ammon.

Douglas: Yes

But you were also good friends. So just to establish the relationship for the purposes of this...for someone who's not from here and doesn't know anything about Darvills, either one of you can answer, how would you describe Darvills? Particularly in the time period we're talking about.

Douglas: It was predominantly farm community, small farm community. It was everybody in this area farming with the exception of just a few people. It was a friendly...friendly area – everyone knew everybody and you never really had any crime in the area that I can remember. It was just an area that I like living in. It was a country area, but you wasn't far off the main highway. I like that.

Gloria: Aunt Irene used to help your mom and dad in tobacco, didn't she? Get up the leaves.

Douglas: Some

Gloria: Yeah, some. And, we would go up to Aunt Irene's and eat. I mean she included at holidays and we would be just considered family.

How do you think the creation of Camp Pickett affected Darvills or did it affect it?

Douglas: It affected it. It affected more the people living in Camp Pickett, it was more farms in the Camp Pickett area and when the government bought – took the land, of course they paid people for the land and it displaced all those farmers and they had to move either toward the Darvills area or Blackstone area, move elsewhere. I know one of the houses was moved out of Pickett, the house that Rennie Bridgeman lives in, that house was moved out of Pickett and ...

Gloria: relocated up there

Douglas: Of course Pickett brought in more money for the area. People down in this area rented rooms to the soldiers when they came so they'd have somewhere to live. One time my mom was renting three rooms to soldiers – she had three different families and I know one year she rented a room upstairs to a family from Iowa. He was a farmer, so they had a lot in common - 'cause see he raised cattle, hogs, and wheat and stuff. So he was a Catholic and every Sunday he would

go to mask [mass] in Blackstone regardless of the weather, snow or whatever. He was training to go, I believe it was to Korea, but he had some back problems, so he was able to get discharged and go back to Iowa. But after that they kept in touch by writing letters and while he was here his parents, his wife's parents came and visited. They were interested in how people farmed in this area compared to how they farmed in Iowa.

So it brought you into contact with people you wouldn't ordinarily have met?

Douglas: Right

In terms of social life in the Darvills area, what did you mainly do?

Gloria: Swim in the ponds.

Douglas: It wasn't a great deal of stuff to do around here other than kids fish in the ponds. Of course, I don't think there's any ponds around that we didn't go swimming in.

Gloria: Another thing they did back then, Lisa, that a lot of places don't do – they had like a community ... what is it? The school – church, what is it? Bible school? Up at the community center when the community center was there. And that was a large drawing in the community was the community center, not only for Bible school. They had a lot of dances there, so it was nothing for every Saturday night to go to a dance up at the community center. So that was kinda the hub of Darvills and activities, birthday parties, wedding receptions. All these types things were held at the Darvills Community Center.

And church?

Gloria: Yes, Yes.

A lot of things centered on church.

Gloria: They held ingatherings at church. Sometimes they had them at the community center.

And they sold turkey meals and brought all of the community buying meals at our church.

Douglas: Darvills Ruritan Club was established. Their headquarters was the, um, Darvills Community Center until the building burned down. But for youngsters if they wanted to go swimming in any lakes around, the nearest one was built on a lake in Blackstone. Then there was one...

Gloria: South Hill

Douglas: Yes, there was one at South Hill. There were two lakes off of Colonial Heights.

Lakeview and Moore's Lake.

In terms of social structure, for people that don't understand, there were families on hard times, family going through a death – what, how would the community typically respond to that?

Gloria: They're always there for each other. They've always been. Taking food to the family and being there if the family needed anything. At one time Mr. Cliborne got sick and his tobacco had not been harvested, and the members at our church got together – Bernard and a bunch of them got together – and helped pull the tobacco. [Looking at Douglas] Don't you remember? So it's a helping community.

Checking on the time...Alright, I'm going to start with some, ah, maybe some descriptions of people we're talking about. I'm going to start with Raymond – Sr., my grandfather, and explain to people who don't know, the type of person he was.

Gloria: He was a no nonsense person.

Douglas: He liked to...he liked fun and well he liked for you [looking at Gloria] to carry on foolishness with him, jokes and stuff.

Gloria: I would joke with him and go up there and just include him, make him feel like he was a part of our having a good time and he liked that.

Douglas: If you didn't know him, you, you might think he, some of the things he'd say might be sarcastic...

Gloria: Or kinda on the grumpy side.

Douglas: But that was just his nature. Spencer Wallace was scared to death of him because [of] how he'd talk – he'd be abrupt you know. If he had something to say, he'd say it. Not ugly, but I know Carlton used to say Spencer was scared to death of him.

Gloria: When I'd go up there to eat up there I would see something that I hadn't seen before – he mixed all his food together and he says, "It's all going the same way, it's coming out the same way so I eat it that way." And I thought that was sort of strange, you know, but that's how he mixed everything together and ate it that way [gesturing].

Douglas: But I always...I didn't have any problem 'cause I used to stay there all the time playing and, um, a lot of times I'd go on the weekends in the wintertime – they'd be sawing wood for, you know, their heaters and stoves and I was trying to help them. So I got along good with him and all.

And he worked where?

Douglas: He worked when I first started going up knowing anything, he worked for the sawmill – let's see, what was Sandra's dad? S.E. Wynn Sawmill. He worked there and the next place I knew of him working was the toll road at Chester, the Chester office at the toll road headquarters – [it] was their office and mechanic shop. That was where he worked when he retired I think.

Alright, so how about Irene?

Douglas: She was always laughing, friendly, and ...

Gloria: Good cook.

Douglas: Excellent cook. Used to enjoy going up there and eating. Course Ammon and Ronald had to have their eggs just a certain way. She used to – they used to like fried eggs and she would have to pat them down flat. They had to have them flat. (laughs) But, she was always jolly and friendly. Good natured.

Gloria: My mother...

Douglas: I never saw her angry.

Gloria: My mother and Aunt Irene were room mothers when Ammon and I were in school, and so that's how my mother got to know Aunt Irene and became close that way. But like Douglas said, she was an excellent cook and she we had W.M.U. back then in the olden days and the days back in the sixties and Irene was a part of an older W.M.U. society that we had and then Anne, her daughter-in-law was with me in a younger W.M.U. But see the women in the church back then did a lot more together than they do now, so...

Is there any reason for that, you think?

Gloria: Well...I, I guess times have just changed, you know, and I don't know why, but ...I mean we do bible study now and we do Sunday school, but we don't have a W.M.U. like we used to have.

Douglas: Back then it was more younger couples in church than it is now. Guess...

Gloria: See, there's so much more to do to pull people away from church now that you don't have young couples interested in being in the church 'cause it's so much other stuff to do. Back then we didn't have that much stuff to do, so – you know – going to the church and going to the W.M.U. meetings and going to Bible ... we had Wednesday night service. Those type of things were socially also, along with learning more about the Bible.

OK... so now how about Dad? Ammon?

Douglas: He was ... he and I were in the same class. We grew up together. Ammon used to really like playing in the woods. When we were younger when I'd go up there he'd always want to go in the woods and play. One time in particular, I think about it a lot, he caught a little squirrel out in the woods, and we were bringing it to the house and he had to cross the fence at the back of the house there. He got ready to cross the fence and evidently he squeezed the squirrel a little bit more than usual and it bit him right in his thumb. (laughs) He dropped the squirrel. I don't think he ever picked up another squirrel. Just bit a hole right in his finger there [shows on his own finger] – blood was coming out, and but we used to play all the time and either I'd go up to his house or he'd come down here. Then, course as we got older we didn't play in the woods like we used, but used to go fishing, and, uh, his brother-in-law would take us fishing before we got old enough to drive...

Gloria: James

Douglas: James on weekends he'd come out, he'd take us fishing different places just up where James was raised at, but ...

Gloria: Ammon was Douglas' best friend and when he passed, Douglas lost his best friend.

Douglas: So...

Gloria: Not only a first cousin, but a best friend.

Now obviously his relationship with his mother was much different than with the other brothers and sisters...

Gloria: Yeah

Douglas: Right...he was....

Can you explain that?

Douglas: Ammon was always close to his momma, and...

Gloria: Maybe being the youngest, I don't know – that could've been it.

Douglas: I think he was closer to his daddy too than the others 'cause his dad seemed to have a closer relationship with him. I guess maybe because Ammon was the youngest.

Gloria: He was a homebody. Ammon liked home.

Douglas: He was probably around home more than the rest of the guys, or the boys, 'cause as soon as they got big enough and they could move out, they left. So Ammon was at home more. He always....he always thought a lot of his momma. He was closer to his momma than his father, but I guess it was just the the disposition of his dad was just different from his momma. I guess he could relate to his mother better, and talk.

Now at this time that he's in the service, Ronald is getting out and he's living with Irene and Raymond. And you can tell there's a lot going on. There's a mention of, Lydia and her wedding. There's mention of him, of Ronald, in a rough state of mind, but he also started with the telephone company and all that. And his mother makes a note...he's brought up often I'll put it that way.

Gloria: Who, Ronald?

Yes, and she tells Ammon not to talk to Ronald about it and to burn the letters so that Ronald never finds out her concerns. Can you explain a little bit about why, I mean, maybe the differences between him and Ammon – why they butted heads sometimes.

Gloria: Could've been some jealousy there – that Ronald knew how close Irene and Ammon were. Could've been some of that. You mention Lydia – see Ronald was dating Lydia and I don't quite know what happened there.

Douglas: Probably Aunt Irene didn't go along with that because they were related. Lydia's mother's mother was a Cliborne which would've been Aunt Irene's first cousin, so...

Gloria: Maybe that's why she had trouble with it.

Douglas: And see I went into the Army...

Gloria: Sixty....

Douglas: I went in before Ammon got out of the Army...

Gloria: Right

Douglas: So I wasn't around all of that time, so I don't know...

Gloria: Don't know all the details there.

Douglas: Don't know all the details on that.

Gloria: Right. See your momma wouldn't know either.

No. She has no idea. Now Jessie and Imogen are your parents [pointing to Douglas].

Douglas: Right

Jessie is Irene's brother and a lot is mentioned about them coming to visit and them going to visit and it seems that Irene was close to Jessie but she was also very close to Imogen and so I wonder if you can, for the record, explain their relationship – Imogen and Irene.

Gloria: They were more like sisters, than they were sister-in-laws. And, Mrs. Cliborne, she – they didn't take vacations and where they went, for the most part, was up to Raymond's and Irene's. And, they'd go up on Sunday afternoons.

Douglas: I think Raymond liked coming down to the house when momma'd invite him to eat lunch. He'd enjoy coming down there and eating. He always kinda liked Momma talk foolishness with him. He liked that.

Gloria: See a lot of people didn't understand that about Raymond. Like Douglas said, Spencer was scared of him, but I heard all this when I came into the family and I thought, "You know, I'm not gonna be intimidated by him." So when I went there, like Douglas said, I carried on foolishness with him – got a bond there with him that I found out that he liked that kind of foolishness. So other people didn't see that, that weren't close to him, didn't see that side.

Douglas: He kinda had a dry wit about him.

Gloria: Yeah

Douglas: But you could get him to laugh. She [looking at Gloria] could get him to laugh.

Now he was very sick at this time, but there's not a lot of talk about that. Do you have any idea why that might be? I mean they obviously talked a lot. He was in and out of hospitals the whole time, but there is really not a lot.

Gloria: Of saying of the cancer he... that he had cancer? I'm not sure what the cancer was, what he had cancer of. Do you know? [looking at Douglas]

Douglas: I was thinking it was lung, but I'm not positive. He died while I was in Vietnam. I know when I came...I came home, um, in December before I went to Vietnam to see him and he was sick then. He was in the bed at that time. I don't know...I don't believe Ammon had gotten out of the service at that time.

Yeah...I would imagine it put a lot of stress on the family, but yet the way...if you didn't understand, you would read the letters and think this wasn't serious. And so it puzzles me...

Gloria: They just didn't talk about illnesses back then, not a whole lot. Um, I don't know that they understood everything medically.

Douglas: You mean letters from Ammon?

And his mom.

Douglas: Maybe she was trying not to worry him.

Gloria: Yeah

Douglas: Since he was still in the Army.

Could've been.

Gloria: That's probably what it was.

But in the case of Ray and Claude, it's the same thing. You read it and think...

Gloria: There's nothing wrong.

Right, easily overcome one day, you know. You do not get a sense of the severity of what's going on.

Gloria: But maybe Aunt Irene just didn't understand the medical problems enough to ...maybe she thought they were going to overcome it.

Douglas: Maybe she was holding everything in.

Could've been. Now in terms of technology of the age at this time they were just getting an indoor bathroom a hot water heater. Was that odd? In that era?

Gloria: No, those were the times then. Don't you think? [looks at Douglas]

Douglas: I'm not sure what time, you say there were just getting...

Gloria: The sixties

'65 to '67 they're just putting in a water heater and indoor bathroom.

Douglas: Um...

That seems to me a little bit late.

Douglas: It was a little late, yeah.

Do you have any idea why?

Douglas: I really don't know.

Putting it off perhaps?

Douglas: I really don't know, but it was getting a little late. Sixties...

Cause I know she was still cooking on a wood stove when I was a kid.

Gloria: yeah

I have memories of that.

Gloria: Well, you know she worked in that garment factory up there in Blackstone and he working for the state, not a whole lot of money when you're raising that many children. So it was probably financial reasons why they didn't do it. I mean I don't want to sound like they were poverty, I mean that, but there were other things that they probably needed the money for and used it.

Douglas: I know Uncle Raymond was conservative.

Gloria: Rather tight.

Douglas: He probably came up that way, you know, hard times when he was coming along...

Gloria: Depression years....Irene and him both.

Douglas: He was on the conservative side. Maybe he just didn't feel that that was really important to him right at that particular time.

Because they'd been without it so long...

Gloria: And see at that point they probably had more money then cause all of the other children were out of the home. And Ammon, by being in the military – they had no other children. So probably at that time they had more money then to do a bathroom and hot water.

It's just interesting...I will say. In terms of social standing, who would you say were I guess families that were well thought of versus those that maybe were not. Or maybe were not so much not well thought of as didn't hold a position in the community like others did.

Gloria: See I came into the community in '64, so prior to that I wouldn't know.

Douglas: I really didn't hear anybody talk about anybody back then.

Gloria: The Winns were considered to have money. Who else? [looking at Douglas]

Douglas: As far as people, I really didn't hear people talking back then.

Gloria: Maybe we were young and didn't realize.

Douglas: Maybe we didn't.

Or maybe they were all in a similar boat

Gloria: Yes

Douglas: Most people were farmers and, you know, they were kind of all in the same...

Gloria: Boat

Douglas: Boat

You bring up the Wynn family and it's interesting that you do that. One...

Gloria: Marianne?

Correspondent of dad's earlier before this time period corresponds a lot. During this time period, that falls off. And I know why, but for the purposes of this, can you explain the change maybe in their relationship that caused a split?

Gloria: She went to college...went away.

Douglas: Ammon and her were kinda, they were close...

Gloria: Friends

Douglas: When they were growing up, some people used to say that was Ammon's girlfriend.

They lived close together and they were always close, or thought they were close anyway.

Gloria: She went off to college.

Douglas: She went. I'm not sure where she went to school. And I don't know whether they kept in touch any after she left for school or not, but her lifestyle changed too. But I know people used to tease Ammon about being his girlfriend.

Gloria: Well, when she'd come home she'd still visit Ammon.

Douglas: Yeah, she'd visit – get in touch with him when she came home.

Gloria: Yeah

Douglas: I don't know whether they corresponded after, you know, when she was away from home though.

They did for a while. Give me an example then of maybe some values that people here had at that time versus how her values changed, so that people who don't know can understand how people like her drifted away from a rural community.

Gloria: Well, after she went to college, you know, she didn't come back home. So...I'm not sure where she was living after that.

Douglas: She did get married after that.

Gloria: Yeah, I think she did.

Douglas: But...

Gloria: It didn't last.

Douglas: I don't think she stayed married very long. After that her lifestyle changed. From what I understand, you know, I don't know for a fact...

Douglas: I know I never really saw her much after she left this area. Very few times did I see her, maybe I didn't know she was back.

Gloria: She called me a couple of times after...just a year or so before she died. She called me and wanted to get back in touch and do some things together, but with me working and being, you know, working, being a mother, going to church I didn't have a lot of extra time. So I never got back with her and probably should have, but I didn't. I used to be friends with Marianne also. We were in school together and I would go home and spend the night with her and, um, I always got along with Marianne. I liked her.

Douglas: I always thought she was more friendlier than Sandra was, more down-to-earth than Sandra was. Sandra was kind...

Gloria: She wanted to rekindle the relationship we once had, so I don't know if she was searching, trying to get back to what she used to have, or...or exactly what she was doing. I mean, I...I sorta, at the time, felt sorry for Marianne and I have my regrets that I didn't get back with her when she called either. And back then a lot of people would make fun of people that are different, but you know, that's their problem, not mine. I...I just wish I'd gotten back with her.

Now you know with Dad everything was black and white. There was no middle ground.

Gloria: Right

It seems to be the case with her that he never could...

Gloria: Accept that.

Yes. Some of the things that she did.

Douglas: But you know I never... I never heard him mention that though. He might have thought it, talk about somebody else. But I...I never heard him bring it up.

In Dad's view, I think, you had an obligation to the community, to the church, to work hard...

Gloria: To your families

To be truthful, you know, a clean lifestyle. Do you think that was pretty much the norm in the community?

Gloria: Yeah

Did most people share, mirror, those values you think?

Gloria: Yes...yes. That's why I think Marianne left this community. She knew that the people would not accept her lifestyle – the way that she had chosen to live. And I'm not real sure that her parents accepted it. I'm not real sure what her relationship was with her father. And...

He passes away at this time, I believe.

Gloria: Yeah. I...I not real sure when he died. But I think Marianne was close to him and that being said, I think that why she stayed away from coming to see her mother. She wasn't that close, I don't think, to her dad.

Douglas: I never really heard anybody say how their relationship was after she left. I know she did ... she was really fond of Ammon. Being as how she left, when she came back she always got in touch with Ammon.

What else do you think is important to know about the community at this particular time that I haven't asked about?

Gloria: I think they were more God-fearing back then than they are now.

Douglas: I think people went to church more then than they do now. Everybody that I knew around, all our friends and neighbors - they went to church and had all their family in church. Where now, people don't...I don't think they go to church as much as what they used to do when we was coming along cause whole families were in church then. I can see a difference now.
And the area was a lot more populated then also.

Douglas: It was more....the original people were here then, now it's – a lot of them, you know people that was here then, either died or families moved. I know Ammon kept church a main part of his life 'cause he spent his, all his spare time at church, looking after the church. He was dedicated to going to see his momma every week when she was in the nursing home.

Gloria: He was, out of all of the children, the most dedicated looking after her and seeing to the fact that she was taken care of and even by Christine letting her, or allowing her, or wanting her to come into their home when she came down with Alzheimer's...which put a strain on her and Ammon's marriage because she [Irene] didn't want you all to come down here and she would say, you know, ask Ammon "Who is that woman?" like she didn't know Christine. And, you know, Christine was a good person to let her come and stay in her home for that period of time.
Or maybe that's the difference in how families...

Gloria: Yep

Supported each other

Gloria: Right, right. But Douglas and I went to see her when she was in the nursing home too, several times, and you know, it's just – she... it was sad to see her mind just go.

Thank you both very much. Is there anything else you want to add at this time? [Both shake their heads no.]

Interview Number Three: Anne and Edgar Vaughan

Prior to the taping, there is a conversation discussing how Edgar and Anne Vaughan want to proceed with the interview. We had discussed via email and phone doing each separately. They decided at the last minute to do it together. Rather than risk upsetting them, the decision was made to go ahead as they chose. In Edgar's words, "We've done everything else together, it shouldn't make any difference. We also discussed having a conversation in which nothing was taken for granted, that things he thought I knew should be fully explained for the audience. It was also agreed that he would not worry about what he thought the information he stated would do to me personally, to treat me as an ordinary person as much as possible.

For the purposes of this – today is Monday, September the 27th I believe [Edgar nods his head in affirmation and says, "yep"] and we're in the home of Edgar and Anne Vaughan in Mechanicsville, Virginia on a much needed rainy day around 10 o'clock [Anne looks at her watch and says "ten after"]. Just for the purposes of being clear I want to make a note that of course I am the niece of both these individuals and so that phrase, "comfort breeds familiarity" and vice versa, I'll do my best to be clear on what we are talking about specifically and I'll make a note also because there are so many Raymonds, I'll refer to "Raymond" or "Dad" to mean Raymond Vaughan "Raymond Jr." or "Jr." for Edgar's brother, and "Ray" for Raymond Vaughan their son [Edgar and Annes], so that you all don't get confused on who's who and what's what. Alright, let me start with you Anne and just briefly kinda give me some background – where you were born, where you were raised, how you came to know Edgar, that kind of thing.

Anne: Oh, I was born in Brunswick County, Virginia – Dolphin. I was raised six years there and I spent...we lived with my grandma for several months and then we moved to on what they call Poor House Road now in Brunswick County which was near Alberta, Virginia. And that's where I lived until I met Edgar. I met him through his cousin and my friend's marriage, wedding. Edgar took pictures and I was a bridesmaid, and the only reason I was a bridesmaid was because my sister was not available to be there to be a bridesmaid. But anyway, that's how I met him and from then on there's chaos.

*Laughs [Edgar taps Anne on the head lightly with a pencil.]
And your maiden name is Samford?*

Anne: Correct

And what did your family do?

Anne: My dad worked for the state highway, a foreman on the state highway. And my mother before she died, she was a [long pause] town clerk at one time. She was also...she worked for the former governor of Virginia Albertis Harrison, which was also in my father's family. And she died when I was six years old and....

Were you the baby of the family?

Anne: I'm the baby. I'm the only surviving person of my family right now.

And you married Edgar what year?

Anne: Ah...[looks at Edgar and asks, "What year?"] Oh, 1954. (laughs)

Edgar: November 6, 1954.

Anne: Oh gee, you remember the day? (laughs)

Edgar: Sure. I got in trouble.

And lived immediately in Darvills after that, or was it somewhere else?

Anne: Yeah, we lived there immediately. Well, he fixed up a house that was...that belonged to your granddad [Raymond Vaughan] and we lived in that house for fourteen years. And then we moved to Hampton, then to Mechanicsville, then to Chesapeake, then to Northern Virginia....or somewhere [looks at Edgar]....to Hampton, to Mechanicsville, and then was it Chesapeake back to Mechanicsville again.

And I know you've been here for about 20 years.

Anne: It was January 1, 1990.

That's what I thought. Ok...well then I'm glad to know my memories going good. (Edgar and Anne laugh) Alright Edgar – same question for you.

Edgar: August 16, 1930 Darvills, of course Dinwiddie County, Virginia...

At home?

Edgar: At home...upstairs in the bedroom, front bedroom. That's what they tell me anyway, so I don't know. I just have to take it as it comes.

Anne: Oh, you lost your memory.

Edgar: And lived there until I got married in 1954 at which time we were at the bottom there, worked on the house down there for fourteen years. I helped daddy do all the, pretty much all the mechanical type work that he did, or a good part of it...around the house there, keeping the house up. From Darvills we went to Hampton. From Hampton we went to....no, from Darvills we went to Petersburg. Petersburg I went to Hampton, Hampton I went to Richmond, Richmond I went to Chesapeake, Chesapeake I went to Northern Virginia, Northern Virginia I came back to Richmond and since January 1990 – it's been twenty years since 1990.

And all the moving was due to...

Edgar: Due to transfers with the Coca-cola company. [Unclear]

How long did you work for them?

Edgar: Plus during that time I managed to get twenty-seven years of National Guard and Reserve time, which helps retirement...which I don't much make.

So you retired from Coca-Cola with how many years under your belt with them?

Edgar: Thirty-seven years Coke-Cola and twenty-seven years of the Guard and Reserve program.

What did you do for each of those? What was your job specifically?

Edgar: The job in the Coke-Cola company was Supervisor of Production. You name it, I did it. Putting up signs, production, sales, fighting with some of the employees every once in awhile. Well, not fight with them, but having a few choice words with them when they didn't want to do what they were supposed to do. And in the National Guard I was...I joined a unit in Blackstone in '47, in August of '47 as a rifleman. Nine years later I was SFC, Sergeant First Class at which time I took a commission as a Lieutenant and at the end of the twenty-seven year period, I retired as Major from the Army Reserve.

Well, that gives us a good background, but I need to take you Edgar back, specifically – all the way back for just a minute. Tell me...because if you were born in 1930, that means you have some recollections of not just your family in the earlier years, but of Indie – I'm not sure about her husband – but I know she died in 1944.

Edgar: Grandma Vaughan, Indie Vaughan was...I remember her very good because she died in 1944. Ammon was born in 1943, my brother, and he was born in April and she died – I think it was April 14 of '44. I think that's what it was. She was a character as far as....and she was a good person, but she had gotten in the stage – when I got big enough to know what was going on, she had Alzheimer's beginning to set in. As far as granddaddy Vaughan is concerned, her husband, I never knew him. I never saw him. He died in a milling accident up there at the flour mill that we had there at the place...well, actually it's not a flour mill either. It was a – what you plane lumber with, planer mill. He got hung in that planer mill some sort of way...killed him. *That's not a good way to go...*

Edgar: No, the way I understood it was a ... kinda a bad accident, but I never...I never saw a picture – I never saw anything on it.

In terms of the community though, in their heyday, they were pretty prominent, correct? They had a wide variety of things going on.

Edgar: Oh he... my granddaddy... was a grocer, a blacksmith, watch maker, bicycle repairman, automobile repairman, undertaker, embalmer....

Anne: You name it, he did it.

Edgar: I reckon he pretty much did everything in the area...for the people there. That was his job, his main job. And he was involved in all of it. And yeah he, he had ... I don't know that he had a whole lot, but he had some money.

Postmaster too, right?

Edgar: Yeah, the postmaster. The original house was out behind the house that's there now, probably one hundred to one hundred twenty-five yards behind the house and sitting over in that field...over where Meade Ozmore lives.

And Indie, you said, was quite a character. And she had a pretty large role in running things too, didn't she?

Edgar: Let's just say she was hard-headed. (laughs) She gone have her way.

Anne: That's where you got it from.

Edgar: Yeah, as far as running the business with her husband, I don't...I have no idea. That's was all before my time.

So how did it come to be that your dad, Raymond, more or less stayed there on the property and the rest of them dispersed?

Edgar: As they got older, or as they got old enough...John Wesley went up to Clarksville, Roy went over to Ford, Hugh went to Blackstone, Alma got married, Erma got married. And it just gradually moved away to different areas as they got married. And after grandma died in '43, '43 or '44, daddy asked about buying the others' part of the place there. And everyone agreed since he'd taken care of her while she was living ... all of them agreed to sell it to him at three hundred

and some dollars apiece. So that was about fifteen or eighteen hundred dollars that he had to come up with back in the forties, early forties. Paid them.

And how was his relationship with the brothers and sisters?

Edgar: As far as his relationship with all of them, everything was fine. I mean he ... I don't think he had any problems, of course, with any of them except Roy.

Anne: Well that's because they were twins.

Edgar: Yeah, Roy and daddy were twins. Roy would come over to the house. He'd stop up there at the woodshed up at the stable, which was seventy-five yards away from the house – blow the horn and if daddy didn't get up and go talk to him he'd crank his car up and go on back home. (everyone laughs). I've seen him do that a many a times. He wouldn't come down to the house. I don't know why. But all the rest of them, you know they were alright.

Anne: But I think your daddy, your daddy and Roy, had a very special bond.

Edgar: Oh yeah, they did. John Wesley was the ... let's see was John the oldest one? I'm not sure that John Wesley wasn't the oldest. Or Hugh was the oldest. Alma may have been the oldest. I'd have to get the book out and run a list of 'em. But John Wesley died in, had a heart attack when he was fifty or fifty-one. [Anne gets up and leaves for a moment.] And I didn't know it up until six or eight months ago that he had two other boys that died in infancy. I didn't know that.

And who told you that?

Edgar: Frances [Vaughan] said she had two brothers that died early.

So specifically with your father, the impression I get is that he's quite a character of his own.

Edgar: He was. He'd do anything in the world that he could for you, but he didn't want nobody to know nothing about it.

[Anne brings out a photo album and sits it beside me.]

Anne: You might want to look at that later.

Alright

Edgar: He went up Blackstone after Claude was born, he come back he said, ‘there’s a baby bed out there in the car, don’t you tell Irene ‘nothing ‘bout it.’

Anne: That was Charles.

Edgar: Well...whatever [elevated volume]. And he would do things for different ones, ‘don’t say nothing ‘bout that now that’s done.’ And...it...daddy, Bob Wallace, and S.E. Winn – if they won’t three of a kind.

What do you mean by that?

Edgar: Well, they grew up together. All of them grew up together. S.E. Winn was over...right over in Wilson. And S.E. had the sawmill down there and he married Bob Moore’s daughter – Inez. And he had a sawmill right next to Bob Wallace. Daddy worked with S.E. for a long time when the store burnt down, just driving the truck hauling logs for him at the sawmill.

So what was life like growing up as a kid from ’30 to ’40?

Edgar: From ’30 to ’40 they had the store up there. [long pause] And I don’t know that we ever went without anything. You know it was food, always food on the table and if we didn’t get it out of the store, we got it from the garden. You grew it....you grew it on the farm.

Right

Edgar: And if you wanted a piece of meat you had to wait until Monday morning ‘til somebody came around selling meat off the wagon. So you buy you a piece of meat and you got what you got. You could’ve just been a tough little piece of meat, tough as leather, but you beat it with a hammer until you broke it down to where you could eat it. So we didn’t go hungry.

What kinds of things did you do?

Edgar: What kinds of things did you do?

Yeah....when you were a kid.

Edgar: You made your own things. It was nothing...it was nothing out there that you could go out and get involved in or do. You just went out and did what you had to do to keep yourself occupied.

Like fighting with Raymond Jr.?

Edgar: Well, fighting with Raymond Jr., fighting with Ronald, Ammon, or any of 'um. (laughs)

Anne: Well, making things too to play with.

Edgar: Yeah, making things and getting out. It was more of a...oh, now let's see what do I want to say [long pause]. Keep yourself occupied. Now if they wanted you to do something, you did it. Don't a stick would catch you real quick. But as long as they didn't have anything for you to do, that was fine, you could do whatever you want to do...be down in the bushes somewhere, climbing trees, or riding grapevines on up in the trees and pull the vines out. Just....

Anne: Smoking monkey cigars.

Edgar: Smoking monkey cigars, [unclear] tobacco. (laughs)

I understand. I understand dad and Douglas got in trouble for that once or twice.

Edgar: Grapevine's not too bad if you try to smoke it. Long as you don't smoke it too far, take the skin off your mouth, but it's not too bad.

(Everyone laughs.) What was their attitude about school?

Edgar: About what?

School

Edgar: Pool?

Anne: No...school [loudly].

Edgar: [long pause] They had...you got a pair of shoes in the fall, you got two pair of pants in the fall, you got a couple of shirts in the fall, a jacket in the fall. That lasted you the whole school year. As far as getting into the school year, you were pretty much left on your own. For your own edifice, so to speak. If you wanted to do it, fine and if you didn't want to do it, then that's all right too.

How about church?

Edgar: Church was basically the same thing. Momma would make us go to church on Sunday most of the time. We didn't want to go to church, she couldn't find us anyway. So... (laughs)

That was your way of getting out of that.

Edgar: Yeah...we'd be down in the bushes somewhere (laughs). She had a ... course they'd get after us once they came back, but that's about it. Yep.

Do you think that....'cause there's a gap between you and Raymond Jr. and Ronald and dad...do you think that they were treated somewhat differently than the two of you?

Edgar: I don't think so.

Same expectations and discipline?

Edgar: I expect....I think they had the same expectations, one had the same thing. And I think...I do know that daddy kinda kept me under his wing as far as learning mechanic work, and working on equipment moreso than the others did.

Anne: Don't you think that's because you showed an interest?

Edgar: Well, probably so. Probably had more interest than the others.

And Pickett comes in '40 or so and they start working on that. Now how does that change the community?

Edgar: Pickett changes everything in '42 when they started building it. Everybody 'round there had people boarding in their houses. I mean by that carpenters, plumbers, you name it – people had to stay somewhere. They were staying in tobacco barns, pack houses, put 'um a couple of beds out there and they would stay out there. And momma and them used to keep...they'd feed 'um breakfast and make lunches for 'um and then fed 'um supper. She had a bed for each one of 'um. If they wanted a bath, they went out to the well and drew 'um a couple buckets of water went on down to the edge behind the wash house and washed out. Or washed up. Or they went down to the river and washed off. No running water around. It was all well water. Everywhere. I don't know that it was anymore...we were used to living that way and it was not a problem. Now when they started, I remember Roy Vaughan...when we got married, I went over to see Roy one day right before we were getting ready to move to Hampton. He looked at me and said, 'ah hah, the ole boy getting' above his raisin', he'll go to the bathroom in the house now.' (everyone laughs)

Anne: That was fourteen years after we'd been married.

Edgar: Yeah, getting' above his raisin' going to the bathroom in his house.

Well it's funny that you mention that because adding on that bathroom was what a lot of those letters talk about...and different pieces here and there, and how important that was. And that was '66 or so.

Edgar: But we'd gone to Hampton.

Anne: Yeah, we'd moved to Hampton.

Edgar: He didn't...Daddy didn't put that bathroom in the house until he'd actually got sick with cancer.

Anne: Well that was...

Edgar: We had moved by then.

Anne: No, no... we didn't move until after your dad died. We moved about six months after your dad died.

Edgar: Yeah, he died in June and we moved in October, no November.

June '67?

Edgar: June '68. He died June '68. We went to Hampton in November '68.

Anne: That's when Roy died.

Edgar: Roy died shortly thereafter.

Anne: He died the weekend we moved.

Edgar: I went over there, I said 'Roy, daddy died this morning.' He sat there and he looked at me kinda hard. He got up, put all his stuff in his pocket. He said, 'well, that don't leave but one of us old son of bitches, does it?' Then he came on over to the house. (everyone laughs) And he went to the house.

Do you think that Pickett not just changed in terms of that type of thing, but also in terms of ...changed the community in terms of its' size?

Edgar: Well, it changed...at that particular time it changed the community immensely. [phone rings, Anne gets up to answer] 'Cause every house 'round there had a family living in it plus three to four people. You didn't know where they were from. You just give 'um a room.

So all of a sudden, new people....no connections.

Edgar: No connections, no nothing were living in every house around there. And I don't think or I don't know that any of them had any problems with any of the people. One man...he had quirks...two or three quirks. I'm trying to think of his name. Anyway, he was just a country 'bumpkin like the rest of us and he was having honey one night with us there at the table and he couldn't figure out how to cut it off. You know, he couldn't turn it up – take his knife and cut it

off. So he sat there. Finally, he took his finger and rubbed it off [demonstrates]...screwed the top back on. (laughs) It's funny to think how things come up. There were bootleggers.

Outsiders or...just people in the community.

Edgar: People that lived around there. Martin, married...

Anne: Rachel

Edgar: No, not Rachel Martin...married [name removed] wife. His wife's daddy had a moonshine still in his dairy barn and he stored his liquor under the spillway of the pond, kept it all refrigeration so to speak.

That's right. (everyone laughs) That's mighty creative then.

Anne: Did they ever catch him?

Edgar: Oh yeah. They caught him. The...down there where [name removed] lives, not where he lived. But he owned a farm down there behind where Finn Bowen used to have an old store. I don't know whether you remember it or not. You know where William Bowen lived?

[Interviewer nods affirmative.] You go past William Bowen's and go back down in the woods there. [Name removed] had a farm back in there. Well, they raided a still on his property – I don't know whether he was involved in it or not – they had sixteen gallons, I mean sixteen containers that would hold a thousand gallons of mash in each one of 'um. That's sixteen thousand gallons of mash. And they had been running it. I don't know how much they got out from down there, but they were runnin' white lightenin. And down at Roy Byrd's...Raleigh Byrd's back in there off the creek that goes across Flat Rock, back up behind Raleigh Byrd's and ...shucks....back where Floyd Hudson lived back up in there near that creek they busted up a big one up in there. [Name Removed] down at Baltimore Corner had about the biggest operation run in Dinwiddie County probably. Anne had, right over where she was living at, he had a still in his

basement. He had a pond out yonder in the field. He'd pump all his mash out in the pond in the field, he had some right happy fish.

Anne: (Name Removed)....You probably have heard of them. I mean they were right well known bootleggers.

Well aside from that, how did most people make their living? (everyone laughs)

Edgar: Well now I don't know how many people made their living off white lightenin, but most of the people out there were actually tobacco farmers...corn farmers. Most of it was tobacco. That was the main crop at that time.

When Pickett came, how many people started working for them do you think?

Edgar: Of that lived right around there? I would say that when Pickett opened up you had, wow – I don't know, half of your work crew was farmers and people that lived somewhere right around Nottoway, Amelia, Dinwiddie, Brunswick County.

Do you think that was the start of more people looking for jobs outside of farming?

Edgar: Probably. It certainly didn't help...hinder it any. I think it helped it, trying to get away from farming because who wants to work out here in a tobacco field all day and make twenty cents an hour when you can go and make a dollar, dollar and a half an hour for an eight-hour day.

And you could count on it.

Edgar: Yeah...but Pickett was open for about five years. It closed. It opened for another year and a half, two years then it closed again. Then it opened up again in '50 and closed again in '54, so it....Pickett has been more of a hindrance as far as people settling down I think, and getting' normalcy. You get big money, then Pickett closed, then everybody go bust. It's either boom or bust.

So aside from the boarders, jobs, and things like that – do you think it brought any other changes?

Edgar: It may have brought a little bit, now don't quote me on this, it may have brought in a little bit of the criminal element. You know, people breaking in houses and stealing and this type thing. But down in Darvills where we were at, we didn't have any of that that I know of.

Besides Pickett, what were some of the other major employers that weren't farm related?

Edgar: The biggest thing that was around there was sawmills. That's about it. There were sawmills. You had some planer mills, Hawks planer mill there on 460 outside of Blackstone. You had...well that was only after Pickett left out that they put in a furniture factory and every one of them that they put in, they closed up. They just couldn't get 'um going. Over in Kenbridge they had Kenley furniture company...great big place over there that would cover five to ten acres. It stayed open for ten, fifteen years and they closed it up. Everything went overseas. You could get it cheap.

How do you think, or what do you think made Darvills a little different from other communities?

Edgar: I don't know that Darvills was any closer or any different than any other community. It was...other than the fact it probably was just a little bit closer knit as far as family were concerned. Because everybody out there was kin to somebody else out there. So that made it a little more closer together.

What were some of the typical values you expected everyone to have, or that they were taught?

Edgar: You got me on that. Everyone that I know of out there they just...they had the work ethic – they didn't mind working, they helped each other out. If anybody get in trouble, they'd help 'um.

Anne: Well, what I saw when I moved over there were the Christian values of most of the people. Most of them were, to me, seemed to be affiliated with the Baptist or Methodist churches and they had Christian values and moral values that [long pause]

You might take for granted in other places?

Anne and Edgar: Yeah, yes. [nods in affirmation]

Edgar: That was ... you either went to Sharon or you went to Butterwood, or Manson.

Anne: There was a community spirit there too. I mean if any family had a death in the family or anything, everybody cooked something and took it to that family or was there for them. That...I mean that was just ...'cause when I moved to Hampton it was completely different, different people down there – transient. I mean I did miss the fact that in Darvills that if anyone had a death or sickness or anything, they would appreciate it if I could help out. In Hampton I was a little bit reluctant to do that because I didn't know how they would accept it. They were different people with different values.

Edgar: Well, they were. They were completely transient. There were all, most of them, ninety percent of them were military transient. Fort Monroe, Fort Eustis, Langley Field, everything at the navy base in Newport News...everything was military. Here today, gone tomorrow. They had nothing to do with you.

[To Anne] You had a much easier time adjusting to Darvills than you did to Hampton?

Anne: Oh yeah, because they immediately accepted me there in Darvills whether it was because I'd married a Vaughan family or whether they accepted me for me. In Hampton, it was a different attitude. Kinda more standoffish and I learned to like it down there, but it takes longer to make friends and get them to accept you.

Edgar: I know we went down there in November. It was June at least before we even got to know anybody. I got to know two or three there in the Coke plant, but the rest of them – uh, un you prove to me what you can do and we'll talk. That's 'bout what it amounted to.

Anne: We had moved down on Saturday and we had gone back up to Darvills on Sunday for Roy's funeral, because he had died at that time and we went up for the funeral. Well, that Monday we went back, and that Monday morning we got up and I was going to take Charles to school. The car wouldn't start. And I knocked on the door of both my neighbors' houses and neither one of them would come to the door. I didn't know what...I didn't know what time school started or anything like that, and finally I called Edgar. I said, 'What do I do?' He said, 'I guess he goes to school tomorrow.' (laughs) And I mean, that's just how the people were although one of them, I found out later one of them had watched us when we moved in and looked out of her window and watched us, but she didn't make a move. And we became friends later, but there when I needed her wasn't any. So...

Edgar: Wasn't any closeness down there.

Anne: So it's a different ballgame.

I would say so. Alright, I'll move up in time now to the period specifically that I'm dealing with is about '65 to '67. One of the things that I notice in the letters that really is puzzling to me, and I hope that you can explain it to me is that mentions are made of your dad like, 'he's not feeling good' or 'well, he went to the hospital but everything's fine'... there seems to be no acceptance of the true state of things maybe is the way I should say it. So could you walk me through when the problems first started and why you think this might have been?

Edgar: He started...I think as if you would if you had a cold or somethin' of that type. And he just never could get better. It always....it just continuously got worse, and worse, and worse. Well they tried all the known remedies that they had for cold sores or cold medicines, and they could do nothing with it. And finally, we had to get him over to M.C.V. That's when he was diagnosed with what was that, what was the name of that? (asks Anne) Lymphodema? No, not

lymphodema. He had cancer anyway. Same thing that Ammon had, basically, and there was nothing they could do about it at that time. So they did try an experimental-type medicine that they were foolin' with at that time which was made from a periwinkle plant. It helped him three or four months. He kinda perked up a little bit, and from there on it was just a downward spiral. So yeah he did have cancer and there was nothing...they had no medicine they could fool with to treat it at that time. It was just like you've seen on some of these death certificates over at the house – consumption, pneumonia, that type thing. They didn't know what it was.

So why do you think then that tone? In the letters – that tone. Did she not understand? Irene – did she not understand what was happening. Did she not want to worry daddy? What was the...

Edgar: I think she understood as much as she could about what was going on. I don't think that she really understood that he could tarry with it six months, eight months, or whatever. And some of it was in, "Nothin' wrong with him." It's just a denial. Some of that was. It was a little bit of all though.

So do you think she had a real difficult time adjusting to that?

Edgar: Yeah...she had a kinda bad time to adjust to it. She finally did, but as you know it's too late by that time. You can either accept or go on about your...

Anne: Well the thing about it is, 'What can you do about it?'

Edgar: Nothing

Anne: And when it's nothing you can do about it, you want to stay in denial as long as you can.

Edgar: You get in the denial phase you say, 'Well, it won't bother me. If I don't know anything about it, it won't bother me.'

If I don't think about it, I don't have to accept it and deal with it. Gotcha

Anne: Although I think that she accepted that he had cancer before he died. No doubt about that.

Edgar: She accepted it when she found out that they were using that periwinkle experimental plant on him. And it did help him for awhile.

Now it seems to me that they had a pretty good relationship. So what then, was the problem. Why did her family initially object to him as her husband.

Edgar: You're talking about momma and daddy and the Clibornes and all that? [interviewer nods affirmative] That's beyond me.

Anne: Did they object to her? him?

I understand that her father had a real difficult time accepting that she was going to marry Raymond.

Anne: Well, I guess you have to understand Raymond or Mr. Vaughan's personality. He grows on you. I mean [Edgar objects]...I'm talking why they objected to your daddy. He, as far as I was concerned, was a man of little words. He was a very good man, but he didn't want anyone to know that he was a good man. [Edgar grins] That was his personality and he'd do anything in world that he could for anybody...if he liked them. But he didn't want anybody to know it. I really respected him for the person that he was because from all appearances on the outside you'd never know how good that man was in his heart.

So maybe he didn't make a good first impression.

Anne: Exactly! (both laugh)

Edgar: They were...let's put it another way – abrupt. They were abrupt. [Anne questions the interviewer about the equipment. Worries that it did not get recorded. She is assured that it is fine.]

So what if he didn't like you?

Anne: Well, he just didn't have anything to do with you.

Edgar: You go on your way, and I'll go mine.

Anne: And I had my doubts for a long time that he liked me, but I found out that he really did.

Not one you could read easily. [Both nod in affirmation.]

Edgar: He'd get on Odie Jr. out there some days, 'Alright cinnamon head time for you to go on home.' And he meant go home too. (laughs)

And how about your mom? Explain her personality, especially for those...somebody who doesn't...

Edgar: Momma was just trying to be more of the peacemaker that I would see than anything else. Trying to keep him half way straightened out, keep us straightened out, keep up with all of us and every weekend we'd either go down to one of the other families for Sunday dinner or somebody'd be at the house for Sunday dinner. Every weekend. You didn't have to worry about it, you were going to eat one day a week. (laughs)

And eat well.

Edgar: Exactly. Course the kids – you'd eat last, but you'd eat.

Anne: Well, to me she was...she was just one of the finest human beings I've ever known. I mean she was just...just a wonderful mother as far as I could see. She certainly was a wonderful mother-in-law. She just accepted people as they were. She just loved everybody and wanted to be a good Christian and there was no doubt about it. She didn't have to witness verbally. It was no doubt about it in her actions the type of person that she was. And I always prayed that I would be the kind of mother-in-law that she was.

Edgar: They never did...they never did have a whole lot. What I mean by that they never had a lot of money, they never had a lot of this [extends his arms out to his home]. What we take today...I've got enough stuff here to fill a house out in Darvills, but they never had this much...in comparison.

Anne: Well, her emphasis...her emphasis was never on material things, just the necessities of life. I mean, and that's the way we all need to be.

Edgar: That's the way life has changed too since that time. It's been a long time since then.

Anne: I never knew a time when I didn't, I couldn't discuss anything I wanted to with Mrs. Vaughan. I mean she was just...she was just like a mother, like a friend, and I knew I could say anything I wanted to to her and she wouldn't be blabbed all over the community like that. She was just that kind of person.

Well, it may be of interest to you...or not depending on how you look at it that she spent quite a bit of her letters to Ammon telling him about y'all, the family – Charles and Claude and Ray, and she's awfully concerned all the time.

Anne: Yeah, about Raymond especially.

So I thought for the purposes of explaining, without me explaining, why she might be about you.

Anne: Well, I think one thing is she was always concerned about Raymond's [Ray] health, as we were, and to do the best that we could for him - to be able to try to get him to live on his own.

And I think with Charles her concerns were I never had as much time as I really wanted to spend with Charles because of Raymond and of course Claude when he was home, taking care of them for their needs. And she just...she realized that I didn't have the time that I really needed to spend with and Charles, and Nancy Zehmer and Linda Sue Tucker...they would come down and play with Charles 'cause I didn't have the time to get out there and play with him really. And so they would come down a lot of times and one or the other, and spend time with him and that meant a lot to me to do that because he was getting some companionship there. I was scared for Wayne, I didn't mind David Lee, but for Wayne to come down and play with Charles because he came down one day and played with Charles outside and let's see....I guess Charles was probably five, six years old something like that. I got ready to give him a bath that night and I

looked and I said, "What in the world is wrong with you?" He had red spots all over his behind and his legs and everything. Wayne had shot him with a bb gun.

Oh, God! What? (everyone laughs)

Anne: I saw Wayne up at...and I said he's not playing with Charles anymore, not with his gun. But anyway I saw Wayne up at Mrs. Vaughan's house one night, one day and I said, "Wayne, I'm gon' tell you somethin' – If you ever come down our house with your bb gun again or you ever touch Charles," I said, "I can assure you that your daddy's gonna hear about it and you know exactly what he's gon' do to you, because, " I said, "if he doesn't do somethin', I am." Wayne's been nice as he could be to me ever since. (laughs) But it was kids...you know.

Edgar: Momma and the whole family pretty much, we had walked into when Claude was bornwe had walked into something no one knew anything about. And then Charles came along and he was fine, and then Raymond [Ray] came along and we walked into it again. And that, I think, is what she was so concerned about...what we were going to do about it, how we were going to do it, if we were going to do it, could we do it...and there was nothing you could do. The only thing we could do was what we did. That's all. And we kept Claude at the house for six years and finally we had to...admitted him to the state institution in Lynchburg. He stayed up there for, I don't know...

Anne: Well, til '69.

Edgar: Six or eight years and then the county had a...or the state had a relocation - if people were living in Hampton Roads they brought them back down to Hampton, Petersburg or some in that area. And since he was living down there that's where they brought him. See he'd been down in Petersburg for...

Anne: Since '69

Edgar: '69 and Raymond has been...several operations. He's been basically around until we moved back down here [Mechanicsville] and we got him an apartment here. He's lives by himself [Anne mumbles in the background – unclear] and does a good job of it. We look after him as far as his food, medicine, doctor's bills and that sort of thing. We do what we can for him and that's it. So yeah, I can understand momma being real concerned about both of them. Now whether that was all of it or not I don't know. She's probably concerned about me too. [Edgar and Anne look at each other in silence for a few seconds.]

Well, yeah, I don't remember her exact phrasing, but somethin' about burning the candle at both ends comes to mind.

Edgar and Anne: Yeah...yeah

Anne: When he worked, I mean he was working...he was hardly ever at home because he worked so many hours for the Coke company and he had his military obligations and it kept him away for quite a bit. And I don't know what I'd have done if I hadn't lived next to Mr. and Mrs. Vaughan 'cause they were always there for me, that's it.

Edgar: Yeah, I enjoyed it. It was...it was rough. But I lived through it. [Looks at Anne.]

Anne: It was an outlet for you too.

Edgar: Yeah, it was an outlet. With Claude and Raymond like they are it was a big outlet for me 'cause I could get out yonder and pardon the expression – I could tear the hell out of something. (Both laugh) I tell you [unclear] shoot the heck out of it. You know that was the, I shouldn't say it, but that was a relief really. It would get bundled up...it would have to go somewhere.

[Edgar seemed to begin getting emotional. After a long silence I continued.] Right. So now in terms of dad [Ammon] how do you think his relationship was any different with your parents, or was it any different?

Edgar: You mean by doing that rather than lettin' it get bundled up?

Well, I mean some of that, but in terms of the choices he made, in terms of their communication with each other. My dad and Irene.

Anne: I know she always depended on him because...

Edgar: He was there.

Anne: Well, the thing of it is to was that he was her baby boy and it's a relationship there, a closeness there that nobody can take away from you.

Edgar: No, I didn't have any animosity or anything like that by him being the baby boy. It was just the fact of life that he was living there at that time, during that time frame – we had gone.

Anne: Well, it was a good thing that he was there for them when we left...when we moved away 'cause we felt awfully guilty about moving away at that time and kinda pulled because we felt that she needed us there, but we also felt that Edgar didn't have a lot of choice in terms of where jobs were concerned. Charles needed the best education he could get and that we needed to get Raymond [Ray] in school. And I was taking Raymond over to Ford to a home teacher...I mean she couldn't come to our house, I had to take him over there several times a week. But yet and still when we moved to Hampton I could put him into a school. So...a big difference.

Edgar: I wouldn't give you a dollar to go back through it or take a million for it.

Well, it seems like each of the children at this time was going through something really difficult.

Edgar: Yeah...yeah, they were.

Anne: In their own way. The thing of it is that when you say difficult, what's difficult for one person may not be as difficult for another. For instance, there are things that Edgar and I went through with our children growing up we could handle. If we'd had a different situation that someone else has had to go through, we wouldn't be able to handle that. That's like drugs and things like that...we'd never be able to handle that. That's just...I just couldn't do it.

Edgar: Some of the things that Ammon had to handle I don't that I'd want to fool with, and some that Ronald had had – I don't think that I'd have wanted to get into 'um. [Anne says, "Raymond Jr. too"] Their own block of problems coming along. I don't think any of us had...

Anne: Well, we learn if the Lord takes us to it, he'll take you through it. That's it.

Edgar: Yeah, I don't think any of us had anything more than we could handle. We look at it now and say unh, how in the world did I do it, but we did it.

I have that feeling on a daily basis. (everyone laughs)

Edgar: Yessiree, we did it.

Now Raymond Jr. in particular seems to have multiple struggles going on and Irene never doubts your ability to handle your situation, she constantly worried, but she never...there was never any doubt there that it would all get sorted through. With Raymond Jr. I get a very different impression and I wondered why that was.

Edgar: Well, [long pause] the oldest one I think, the first one in the family – they had a little higher expectations with the oldest one that they did with any of the rest of 'um.

Anne: I think he had different spouse too.

Edgar: Yeah, that...that is the biggest problem right there. Momma or daddy either one never had a great deal, let me rephrase that, (laughs) well they put up with Muriel, but to actually have confidence in Muriel that she could do this, that, or the other on her own – I don't think she did. I don't think either one of them did. Muriel was too much of a hot head. It had to be her way, and that was the Caldwell way. And I shouldn't be saying, but that's the way it is. That's the way it was. She's hard headed too [points at Anne and laughs].

No, I just get the impression that Raymond Jr. never could decide on what ...I guess he struggled with who or what he wanted to be versus people's expectations of what he should do or be and then coupled with that, maybe some insecurity or maybe some difficulties in getting along with his family or maybe him seeing himself as he should've been the star attraction and I don't think, given what I've read, that he was. Not that he was favored, I don't really see a favorite when I read the letters, but what I do see is just a tough time in getting along. [Both Anne and Edgar nod affirmative throughout]

Edgar: Well that was true...that was true and it was all coming from his head. That was his thinking. He...

Anne: Maybe he set his ideals too high.

Edgar: Well, it was that. He had this ideal set that he was gon' be in the guard. He missed movement one day. We were going to [unclear] camp and he missed it. We left him. He didn't get his butt up, come up from Emporia where he was at and meet us in Blackstone where he was supposed to have been. Well...

Anne: Did he ever show up?

Edgar: He finally came up to A.P. Hill. He got up to A.P. Hill that day, but he missed the vehicles going up there. Well, Lynn [Vaughan] put his butt on restriction for the whole two weeks and he didn't think Lynn should've done that. Lynn, long about that time...Lynn reduced him one rank for that same thing. That blew his mind out of the way too and he just couldn't...couldn't accept it. So, he was an E-7. He reduced him back to an E-6. Well, they gave me his discharge papers when he got discharged and asked me if I'd give 'um to him. I said, "Yeah, I'll give 'um to him." So I go on and open it up and look at it and I saw where he'd been reduced back. So I carried back down to McKenney about a couple of months before he died. I said, "I ran across this. I was given that to give you as your last discharge." He looked at it and throwed it in the trashcan. He said, "I was not supposed to be that. I was supposed to be a Master Sergeant E-7." I said, "Well..." And I knew what had happened. But I said, "I've got nothing to do with that. I had nothing to do with it. That's the way it is. Now if you want to take care of it, you have to go to the state AG [Army General] and get it resolved." And that was the last of it. But he, like you said, he always had little bit higher than he could do, or he wanted to do. And he

had two or three jobs. One of them was the collection agency for General Motors automobile. He did that for several years. Then he got out of that, I think they fired him. He got into this...

Anne: Dale Carnegie

Edgar: Yes, Dale Carnegie course which was public speaking and all this kind of thing. Then he got into this...oh shucks, where you get your credit score.

Anne: Well he worked for the bank too.

Edgar: Yeah, he worked for the bank for awhile, then he got out of that. Then he got into credit reporting type thing and that was what he was in before he died. That he had sold it and put everything in it in Muriel's name. Which...I had talked to him, I told him, "Don't mess around Jr., you doin' wrong." "That's what I want to do." Well I said, "OK, I got no problem with that. I do have a problem with it, but I'm not going to fuss about it." And he finally admitted about a month before he died, he said, "I wish the Lord a many a time that I had taken your advice and went on and stayed for the twenty years [National Guard]." I said, "I wish you had too." For the guard and reserve program. But that was a case of Muriel, let me...I don't know. That was a case of Muriel throwing the whip. Or a two by four. You gon' do what I want or else. Period. Bam.

Plus she was used to a different type lifestyle, correct?

Edgar: Well, she wanted a different type lifestyle. I don't think she was ever kind of used to it.

She didn't grow up that way, but wasn't she in the pageants or something like that?

Edgar: Now what?

Anne: Beauty pageants.

Edgar: That I don't know. She could've been.

She had a taste for the good life.

Edgar: Yeah, but what little bit he had she wanted it right then and it was just too...more than what he needed. And when he died, he died just as broke as that tabletop right there.

Well now I know he and I resolved our issues before he died, so I'm at peace with that. I never did understand the problem he had with dad – never understood why there was no relationship there. I never understood why he wasn't more involved with us. He was the only one that wasn't. So, I mean, I have zippo memories honestly.

Anne: Well, he was...I think he was...he was like that with most of them, of his siblings. Don't you think so? [asks Edgar]

Edgar: In a sense, yeah.

Anne: Well, we...

Edgar: Well particularly with Ronald and Ammon.

Anne: I think with us it was more on our end of it as far as trying to seek a relationship with 'um. I think it was more on our end than it was on theirs.

Edgar: But it was some too, and I shouldn't even get into this, that... that there was some, a whole lot of jealousy that I made it up to a Major and he didn't make anything but an E-6. And there was a whole lot of jealousy about that.

Anne: Well, he probably thought that Lynn was favoring you.

Edgar: Well...Lynn didn't favor me any more than, I don't think, than he would have him if he'd have tried. [Anne agrees] It was a matter of not trying. Yeah, Lynn favored me, no doubt about it he pushed me.

Anne: Yeah, you'd have never fallen out of that jeep if he hadn't favored you. (laughs)

Edgar: He pushed me. No doubt about it.

Why do you think each one of you ended up going into the military, except for Helen obviously, but...

Edgar: Ronald and Ammon...it was either go in the military or the draft. At that time the draft got them. Both of them were drafted for two years. We went in to try to get a few pennies extra money. And he [Raymond Jr.] went in in May of '47 right after they reorganized and he needed a little money. Course you didn't get but two and half dollars a day. But two and half dollars a day was two and half dollars a day back at that time. And then I joined in August of '47 and two dollars and a half a day and that helped a whole lot too. Momma and daddy didn't have a whole lot of money. Couldn't go to school – didn't have any money to go to school with and what I did as I went on up in rank and got commissioned, I took all the money that I could get out of it and put it in a little slush fund and that's what Charles went to school on. So I didn't spend hardly any of it...on us. So he went to school on that.

Why the switch? I think you went from Guard to Reserves or I might have got it backwards.

Edgar: Me? [Interviewer nods affirmative] I went into the Guard I was an E-6, matter of fact I was a Captain when I got out of the guard and went over. When you're commissioned in the Guard you get dual status. You get state Guard recognition and then you get federal recognition. So if you get out of state Guard you automatically back in the federal recognition program. So I got out as a Captain out of the Guard and went right into state, I mean federal, down at Fort Lee as a Captain down there. And I stayed a Captain down there for I reckon three years, something in that neighborhood and then they decided to promote me as a Major. Put me in a Major slot and promoted me. Now to get any higher I would have gone, had to gone to Command General Staff course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for nine months. I didn't figure I wanted a masters degree in the military (laughs). I just figured I didn't have it up here to go through all that kind of stuff.

Anne: He didn't figure he had a job when he came back.

Edgar: That's true.

Anne: Unlike a lot of other companies he wouldn't of, they wouldn't of held his job for him.

You mean Coke?

Anne: Coke...right. [Edgar nods affirmative.]

Edgar: Yeah, me and uh...the reason I got out of the Guard...me and the Battalion Commander didn't have a meeting of the horses. (laughs) He was a Lieutenant Colonel and I was a Captain.

Anne: He said Edgar was too much of a Christian to be a Captain.

Edgar: One of them told me I was the biggest, sorriest son-of-a-bitch he'd ever saw too. I said, "Well, that's fine." (everyone laughs)

Thank you, and have a nice day. (everyone laughs)

Edgar: And the Company, the Battlalion Commander said, "You can't be in this Battalion because you are too much of a Christian." But what really set it off...I was with Petersburg in a unit down there. The Battalion Commander and the rest of the Battalion was over here in Richmond. Well, every weekend that we had drill I had to bring the Petersburg unit over here. I had to be over here at that same time that they had roll call - at eight o'clock, which means I had roll call down there at six o'clock, get 'um loaded up, and get 'um over here so I could have roll call over that at eight. And this was getting' to be kinda stinkified, so I got a call one day from the...a Bird Colonel and he said, "Captain Vaughan, can y'all - can you meet us down at King's [restaurant] at Colonial Heights for lunch?" Course I reached up and scratched my head thinking now what the heck have I done now.

Anne: Did they pay for your lunch, that's what I want to know.

Edgar: Yeah

Anne: OK

Edgar: So I said, “Yes, I can meet you down there.” So I met ‘um down at King’s at Swift Creek and we sat down and started talking. He said, “Captain tell me what’s going on between you, the unit, and Battalion.” He said, “Now don’t leave nothing out.” So I unloaded on him. I told him exactly what was going on, how I had to do it, this, that, and the other. He looked at me, he said, “You don’t have to worry about that anymore.” So next time we had a regular monthly drill I got a letter from Battalion, you don’t have to come over here – you can drill down at Fort Lee. You can go down to the rifle range or wherever you want to go down there at Fort Lee. Make arrangements. So that’s what I did. I fed my own unit down there – we had Fort Lee or Fort Pickett, whatever. I didn’t see these people over here. But buddy he was doing a slow burn. I done squealed on him. I didn’t squeal on him. I didn’t have any idea, I didn’t go to the man – the man called me to come see him.

So obviously he knew.

Edgar: He knew. Anyway, I stayed in there a little less than a year and then I got out of that.

Went down to Fort Lee.

Things were much better then. [Edgar departs for a moment.] Before he gets back, let me ask you this (to Anne) ‘cause I haven’t had a chance to talk to you as much.

Anne: Well really, he’s got the answers...about Darvills.

What do you think a person that didn’t grow up there, because you didn’t – you’re the only one of us that didn’t but had a connection to the family, how or what should people who don’t know, know? What do they need or what can they learn from a community like Darvills?

Anne: Well, I think the closeness of the neighborhood, I mean although you’re not in sight of everybody like you are in town. They are a community that cares and they just have their roots there. It’s a place you’ll never forget, I don’t think. I mean you just feel at home there regardless, and if I went back I’d still feel at home even though its different people that live there now.

[Edgar returns] I felt like it was a wonderful community to live in. There is one thing though that

I learned, but I think that's everywhere that you go. When I moved to Hampton I said, "Oh, Boy! I'm gon' get away from the fact that everybody knows everybody's business and then tell it." Whether that's partly because there's so many people that are kin to each other there or what, but after while that's...it gets old. There're a lot of things about this person or that person and you really don't feel like it's any of your business. And that's the only thing that I didn't...that I felt uncomfortable with because of the situations like that. But I think you're going to find that most any small community.

What you really need to know is going to be in the Courior anyway, right? (everyone laughs)

Anne: That's the way it is now.

Edgar: The Blackstone Disturber, boy, it is something.

Anne: They need a new person to write all the newsworthy notes in Darvills now, so...

That's something else...that's for sure. Well, Edgar can you think of anything else that might help me or help another generation down the road to kind of understand maybe the differences between then and now, and what you think made growing up there unique.

Edgar: Would I move earlier than I did? Is that what you're asking?

No, not specifically. I mean obviously it's hard for me to say because I've done both and I'm connected to it. But for somebody that has no knowledge of the area, what do they need to know about it? A hundred...two hundred...

Edgar: About the Darvills area? [Interviewer nods affirmative] Out in Darvills the first thing you've got to learn is to be self-sufficient. There're people out there that will help you, but you've got to ask them. And the next thing is just like the little lady that bought the house over there. She's got a heating system out there, she's got a generator system. She's got to be self-sufficient and I think she is, pretty much so. She can live out there. Barbara [Wilkins] can live out there because she's got gas. And the ones that's got heat, I mean gas and generator, can live out there. But if you don't have a generator and a heating system or at least hooked up some sort

of way that you can get one room or two rooms warm out there then it's tough living out there, there's no doubt about that. 'Cause you know – It's tough living out there. Because those old houses – ours, the Moore's, let's see...that's about all that's left now, Lewis Hardy's house. I don't know how good that house is insulated up, but it'll be hard. That'd be the first thing, just get yourself self-sufficient. You've got to have the knowledge and the know-how to grow your own food out there because let's face it, you can't run to Blackstone. Ain't nothin' in Blackstone, ain't nothin' in McKenney. Very little in Petersburg.

And most people don't garden anymore. Not now. [Both agree.]

Edgar: If they can't get it in a can now, they're in trouble.

You're right.

Anne: But you know there's nothing like growing your own food and raisin' your own pigs, cows...and slaughtering the pigs and the cows. I mean even if you don't do it at home anymore, you can take them to a slaughterhouse to have them slaughtered and frozen and everything.

Edgar: There's not many of 'um left now. [Anne agrees] There's one at Amelia Courthouse that I know of and that's about it. 'Course I still know how to do it, but (laughs).

Anne: I don't think they're gonna let you put a pigpen in the backyard here.

Edgar: Naw...naw I wouldn't put a pigpen here, but if I moved back to Darvills I could put a pigpen out there and I could have fresh pork. I could have fresh meat.

You've been many different places, so you have a different perspective than somebody who's lived in Darvills their whole lives, so what can you explain to people in general about what makes a person from Darvills different? Do you think they have any characteristics that make them stand out?

Edgar: I don't know...there may be some characteristics that help them stand out, but I think the main thing – the ones that live out there in Darvills that came up when we came up, we were self-sufficient. We were self-sufficient, no doubt about it. The only thing that we bought was

maybe some salt, some sugar and that's about it. Everything else was right there at your place, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and the whole ball of wax.

Anne: But they were in the good 'ole days, what about now?

Edgar: Now, a lot of the peo...if they wanted to go back out there they would have to acquire a lot of those traits. They'd have to acquire them.

What else that I haven't asked do you think is important for people to know? About the family? About the situation then? About Pickett? About the community? Anything... What have I not touched upon that you've thought of as we've been talking.

Edgar: It's so much that went on out there during that time. I would hate for them to come in and take seventy some thousand acres that are not already included into Pickett and see it totally destroyed. It's surprising the number of houses....now granted some of 'um were shacks, but there were some houses over in those...in Pickett that were mansions. And what'd they do?

When they got ready to start shootin' they set fire to one side and burnt everything out there.

That leaves a big impression.

Edgar: It does. You take seventy some thousand acres and they burned everything out there. Just run a bulldozer in the corner of the house and drop it down, throw a match in it.

Anne: Well the thing of it is too the displacement of all those people.

Edgar: Yeah, all those families out there. The white cemetery out in Butterwood...all the white families were moved up there. Where you go in just past Jack Wainwright's, you go in that road there, go down through the parking lot – pretty much all that over there on the right is full of graves, but you'd never know it the last twenty-five years. There's never been a grave [stone] out there, but it is all graves. And the black cemetery down there at...next to Darvills school – that is a travesty. That is a travesty of whatever. That cemetery is not been cleaned, cut, or anything done to it in fifty years.

I didn't even know it was there. You're telling me something.

Anne: Have you seen the marker that they put down there? When we were first married, Odie and Barbara lived across the street from where...road from where the black cemetery was.

Edgar: Over by McKissick's place.

Anne: So we used to visit them a lot, but we'd go through that cemetery and drive through there and you could see where the graves were. Well, the trees and everything have grown up in there. People have come in there...well maybe the roots of the trees or whatever had knocked over the stones and everything. Then they'd go in there and cut trees down and...

Edgar: That is the ten acre cemetery. It had a chain link fence around it and they moved every black cemetery or grave they could find out at Pickett down there to that one place. The...as far as I know the trees has been cut in that cemetery two...at least two times. Nobody can tell you where the money went. They don't know who cut it, they don't know who got the money, and it was supposed to be a plot down there at Shiloh Church, but nobody knows where the plot's at. Nobody knows where the plats at. Nobody knows nothing. I have gone to Wade Hamner. I have gone to Joe Macmillian, all of them up there. I said, "Is there..." because Wade's daddy is the man that moved them.

And no record.

Edgar: No record.

Anne: Maybe Hawks has it.

Edgar: Nobody can find it momma. That's what I'm saying.

Anne: Maybe that lady that worked on it so long.

Edgar: She didn't have it.

Anne: She would've checked with Hawks though.

Edgar: Yeah. They'd a black lady there that died about a year and a half ago. She was doing a fair job of trying to get a little bit at the time. But since she died...nothing.

Anne: It's so sad. It really is. That anything...that it could come to that.

Edgar: I have told Anne a many a time I would certainly like to win the lottery, and if I did I'd go down there and clean that cemetery up. And it's got nothing to do with me, I just hate to see it down there.

Anne: I hate to see it in the shape it's in.

It's disrespectful?

Edgar and Anne: Yeah.

Edgar: The black race just completely let it go, and there was...but they cut it, a pecan tree down there. It was as big around as this room is. We'd never seen such a pecan tree. Last time I was in there the pecan tree is gone. Somebody done cut the pecan tree down.

Anne: Well, they probably used it for furniture or something...

Edgar: And the cemetery, you go in at the corner – you kinda go around, ...round....round...round...you can't get around. People have gone in there, backed their cars in the road that goes in the cemetery and just unloaded trees and limbs and bushes. You can't even get through it. [shakes his head] Yeah, I would like to see that done, but I doubt if I will.

Well...I thank you very much, both of you. You survived it. (everyone laughs)

Anne: We survived it.

Edgar: I didn't have any problem with this. It's just a...it's just so much going on out there, or that has gone on. You take Jackie's old big house out there, 'ole Doc Thompson's place. God, that was a beautiful house. [shakes his head] And he took it down, or took out everything out of it that he wanted out of it, had it refinished, and put it in his new house.

Anne: Have you ever been in his new house?

No, I'm supposed to go Thursday and talk with him then.

Anne: I've never been in there. I've been up to see them, but I always sat on the back porch. But Edgar's been in his house.

Edgar: You know they've got wainscoting – the rooms, the old big rooms back in there had wainscoting all around. Wainscoting was about three foot wide made out of one board, not put together. One board running all the way to the corner, another one run right across here, and another one run across here. He took all them board out, cleaned 'um up, and put 'um in his new house.

Anne: As wainscoting?

Edgar: As wainscoting.

Anne: Wow!

Edgar: Pine...heart pine.

Anne: Ooh..I'd love to see it.

Edgar: He took all the heart pine flooring up that he could salvage, cleaned it up, and put all of it in his new house.

Anne: I wanted to see it so badly that day. [unclear] On the back porch I wanted to ask Jean could I take a tour of her house, but I never got up the nerve to do it.

Edgar: Everette Procise's house over there, I think the old house's been torn down. He built a new one. And Laura...Laura Procise she's pretty much Alzheimer's. Everette's wife was with her the day I saw her. [shakes his head] And all of the...

Anne: The thing of it now, Lisa, is that even in our genealogy...you know us looking back, we don't have anybody to ask because anybody older than we are is dead. I was talking to my

cousin, which he's eighty-five about the Samford genealogy. We were talking about it and he said, "Well Anne, you realize it's nobody for you or I either one to ask anymore because everybody else is gone."

Right. Well that's the reason I'm trying to put this much together.

Edgar: That's a lot of that right there. [points at the camera] And you know the old [route] 613 went down behind...between the barn and the house. All the way down to Sydney Wainwright's. I remember as good [unclear] when they came through there, took the telephone wire down. They had telephone wire running, old wire running through the limbs sticking out, trees with insulators all in them. They'd lay a fastener up side a tree somewhere and run the wire up there through the tree. We got enough wire out of that thing...I think we put two strands of wire all around that place. They just pull off a half of pile of it and tie it to the station, the thing on the back of the truck would roll – put a piece of wire around it and kick it off, "It's your wire." If the poles were out there, they'd pull the poles up "Your pole." You could go out there right behind the house let's see...about ten feet right there in the rowing bed – I don't know what kind of bottles you'd find in there. It would be an archaeologist's dream to go out there and start digging. And then from right there on down to the road that comes up right there on the edge of the field down to the old barn – ain't no tellin' what's in that place. Golly Moses! Bottles, jugs, jars, goodness...course there was a lot of 'um that's been busted in there too.

Chapter 4: Significance and Conclusions

*Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
The early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.
-Robert Frost*

At first glance, this may seem an odd quotation to use. These letters may seem like commonplace correspondence between mother and son, yet there is much to be learned from what is stated and, as important, what is not stated. If you read the poem again and think about it in the context of what's been shared here, then it makes perfect sense. It is a poem that I learned to recite as a teenager, and I have never forgotten it. The many meanings that can be constructed from it are pertinent to this study. For me, it is the perfect benediction to a discussion of the rural South as it existed in Southside Virginia during this time. Agriculture, family, and community are all reflected in this.

There is no mistaking the impact of tobacco and farming on this rural area. It is discussed over and over again. For nearly everyone, their livelihood depended upon it whether directly or indirectly. The “green” shoots that survived to become the “gold” of harvest in the fall were the lifeblood of these people. For the Vaughan family, however, their direct dependency on the growing was minimal. They had given up on that enterprise in favor of other endeavors. They were affected by the credit they lent to others dependent on its market value and for added supplementary income. If the locality did poorly, everyone suffered. Indeed, they were tied together in mutual networks that sustained them and equated them with others. Mentions here of

how the crop is selling, how certain farmers (such as Jackie Powers) are doing, and how the weather had been, show that this family identified closely with the problems and prosperity associated with raising tobacco despite having no direct link to it.

Another factor to consider is family itself. In a sense, the Vaughans matured during this time also. A seemingly carefree lifestyle had changed due to financial struggles, health issues, and so forth. The children had to grow up quickly, going from an innocent childhood to an adult life with responsibilities that were at times overwhelming. Edgar had to handle the duties of raising a family, made more difficult with the challenges of having two children with disabilities. Ammon dealt with the adjustments of military life and transitioning from boyhood to manhood. He was also away from home at a time when so many health and financial challenges for the family were first manifested. Ronald also dealt with developing an adult identity. The other children and neighbors all shared numerous difficulties and losses in such a short time period. In a sense, the “green” time of prosperity in Darvills had quickly turned “gold” and was fading away.

Although the letters do not give us deep insight on Irene’s thoughts and feelings at this time, there are a few glimmers of her own adjustments. She laments the loss of her baby boy, now a soldier, her right hand, a companion, and helpmate. We know that she was in a sense overwhelmed by concern for each of her five children and the enormous burdens they carried. Add to that the financial problems and an ailing husband, and one can only imagine her state of mind and the physical toll on her. Going solely by the letters, she expressed little negativity and took everything in stride. Probing deeper through oral history, we find that she was in a sense over her head. There were numerous things that she could do and did well: cook, plant, sew, etc. Navigating an illness like cancer is hard even when one is educated in health matters. Getting

little information on what was happening to her husband, she seemed to be in denial of sorts followed by acceptance that this was simply how it was meant to be.

Melissa Walker's work offers a great deal of insight on the inner workings of the rural woman's mind. In her interviews and collected letters, there are both personal and collective referents in symbolic stories that overlap and reinforce one another. The common experience of self-sufficiency, for example, is a personal one that is tied to the collective community as exemplified by mutual aid. These "stories about self-sufficiency, mutual aid, and the work ethic functioned as symbolic representations of the common experiences that bound rural people together in a community of memory."¹²⁰ These themes make the reader acutely aware of the individuality of this particular agrarian community. With women specifically, the work in which they engaged falls into four categories: "(1) reproductive work such as the cooking, cleaning, and child care that 'maintained people on a daily basis and intergenerationally,' (2) producing goods for the household and market, (3) field work, and (4) neighborhood mutual aid."¹²¹

These categories repeat again and again throughout Irene's letters and in the accounts provided by others. She is continually canning, cooking, or preparing food. There is also a great amount of discussion on gardening and the work involved. Community events such as showers, weddings, and so forth, all involve food, decorating, and other domestic preparations. Deaths and/or illnesses involve caregiving and cooking for the family involved as an extension of the support system in place. Even tasks in other settings such as the church center on communion, ingathering, and other activities that require culinary effort and domestic tradition. In her case, these duties are exponentially greater in significance because her home was central, not just to her own family members, but to the extended members of family on both sides. There were also

¹²⁰ Melissa Walker, *Southern Farmers and Their Stories*, (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press), 2006, 79.

¹²¹ Melissa Walker, Editor, *Country Women Cope With Hard Times: A Collection of Oral Histories*, (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press), 2004, xxv.

the responsibilities she had off and on to provide lodging, laundry, and meals for boarders from Camp Pickett. Yet most puzzling, perhaps, is omission of the fact that she is working a full-time job, up to forty hours a week, at the nearby Levi Strauss plant in Blackstone. Despite the amount of time spent there during the week, the correspondence only mentions a few occasions of working overtime. On any of the other details of her work, however, the letters fall silent. She does not discuss the nature of her work, those who are working with her, or any other minutiae surrounding those responsibilities. This is curious given that a great deal of her time is spent there. Working outside of the home provided the much needed income, but it did not seem important to her. In her mind this was solely a means to an end. The tasks, whatever they may be, do not hold the value or personal connection for her that the household and community obligations do.

Additional matters deserve attention and thought for further discussion and research. For instance, there may not be many examples available for study of men in the military corresponding regularly with their mothers at this particular time period, certainly not with the degree of involvement and/or the quantity of correspondence. There are subtle issues in these letters that deserve attention. This particular mother-son relationship is unusual in that the letters seem more like correspondence between close friends. There is an obvious reliance on the son and a tenderness not generally shown with a parent and adult child. Circumstances produced a unique connection, centering on strong belief systems and family loyalty. Those belief systems extend into the locality are later manifest in the different relationships Ammon has within his family and community.

The vernacular of Darvills is unique. This is an area that is close to the nation's capital and the city of Richmond, yet remains rural and isolated. The language is at times difficult to

understand. There are subtleties that the average reader might miss without close knowledge of the area. Sometimes the information left out is as much message as the words contained within the letter. Growing up there, the nuances and connections are familiar to me. Therefore, the whole message of the letter may be examined, not just the obvious wording of the passage.

Parallel to the community's isolation is a lack of technology. Not until 1965 did this family even acquire modern plumbing and electricity. A new well was drilled, a hot water heater put in, a bathroom built on, and electricity added to the home all within this 1965-1967 time frame. Even with electricity, a woodstove remained the primary source of heat for warmth and food preparation. The pump house stored home-canned goods, and the smoke house the meat. Agriculture was done by hand by families, for tractors and such are reserved for the "serious" tobacco farmer. For those relying solely on tobacco for their livelihood, mechanization would soon become the key to allow them to stay ahead even when the market was slow. In other words, new technologies allowed for efficient use of time and resources (including human). Contingencies could be planned for and provisions made to lessen the impact of inclement weather.

Community activity centers on the church and the life experiences it supports (death, marriage, christening, baptism). Even social activities are related to religion in some manner, such as the Women's Missionary Union and revival services. Among family, nothing indicates abnormalities. There is little mention of relatives with severe disabilities or illness. One immediate family member – a child on crutches – is overlooked as being any different. Another is institutionalized, but the reader might get the sense that the individual is only absent. Part of this is denial. There is somewhat of a stigma placed on a family by such defect. By ignoring it, many seem to "forget" the existence of a problem and maintain their social standing in the

community. It is also a statement of perseverance. The mantra of most rural individuals is to take the good and bad of life and deal with it. This especially includes those who have to work harder than others. Despite the fact that the community will care for its own, there is still a belief that you should do all you can to help yourself. Otherwise, the label of laziness or dawdling develops and shadows the reputation of the family.

The reader also forms a definite sense of military life from the eyes of a young recruit away from home. Not only are the routines established, but a clear picture of the promotion process and assignments to schools/jobs is provided. It also allows for a balanced view of service as both responsibility and opportunity. Many rural men got the chance to do and see things that they would not ordinarily do. The world at large was always a looming force behind the daily challenges, and these themes emerge from the shadows from time to time in the words and actions of the correspondents. Vietnam is mentioned multiple times. Although there is no discussion in these letters of the issues behind the conflict, there is a definite sense of danger attached to the war. No specifics are given, but one can tell in Irene's letters in particular that much has been seen on television. Her worries are clearly defined in wanting her son to see the world, but not on terms that could cost him his life.

Another insight that emerges from these letters and discussions is the role that the reserves and National Guard had in providing rural men with added income and access to activities outside those they grew up with. For instance, Ammon mentions learning to play golf during his time at Fort Jackson. Golf was not an available sport in his community. Also, it provided an opportunity to meet people from other areas of the country and learn from them. One person Ammon met in the service was from California and he was always fascinated by how different things seemed to be there. Edgar, in conversations throughout my life, has mentioned

various individuals he met in the military from all over the country. National Guard enlistment in rural areas has received little attention and warrants further research. Most sources list rural areas as having a twelve to twenty percent greater likelihood of military enlistment than other geographic locations, with the heaviest concentration in the southeast even today. Many scholars have hypothesized the reasons for these figures. Several have suggested that the culture lends itself to a perfect fit. The skills and lifestyle necessary to be successful in a military career are naturally predisposed to those growing up in locales that emphasize hunting, self-sufficiency, strong work ethic, and even religious faith. James DeFronzo and Jungyun Gill suggest that there is “a sort of natural match between the rural environment and experiences of rural life, and serving in the military.”¹²²

The military is one of the few institutions where these people came into contact with people outside of their sphere of influence. This link to others created a broadened perspective. In the military, they could interact with people without social pretense or protocol. Ammon talks about traveling and playing golf, two opportunities not afforded to him at home. Additionally, the military functioned as an outlet from the demands of everyday responsibilities. Certainly this was the case for Edgar as he struggled to raise two disabled children at a time when there were no programs in place to provide assistance. In listening to Edgar’s responses and reading Ammon’s letters, the reader also gets a sense of the importance in doing well and moving up through the ranks. At home, you may be just a farmer, but in the service you had the opportunity for education, training, and leadership. People respected you based on your performance alone. This was a significant boost to a person’s confidence and self-esteem. It was also quite different from the family-related status they held back home.

¹²² The Daily Yonder, <http://www.dailyyonder.com/hunters-aim-military-service>, May 1, 2008.

Not just events, but social mores and cultural ideologies shape individuals. There was a real sense of identity among these people despite whatever happened or changed in their lives. Regardless of circumstances, family forces were strong and defined behavior. Family history was important, too. There was great care taken to be respectful and do “the right thing” when dealing with the elderly of the community. Mentions of visits and gatherings with family members are primary in these letters and in the rural culture of Southside Virginia. Those who were not able to visit weekly were expected to call or write to keep the family abreast of the news. There was pride in their accomplishments and a real sense of honor among the members. In Darvills and the surrounding areas, family was what set you apart from others. It was your identity and collectively celebrated by all as Ammon Vaughan’s life exemplified.

One of Ammon’s friends recently talked with me and told me that very few individuals know who they are and where they belong in this life. In his opinion, Ammon was one of those few who knew his place. He was comfortable where he was, doing what he liked to do. There was no pretense or “airs” in his lifestyle. What you saw was what you got. The isolation of this locality for many years in a sense produced an anomalous area. Since then, interaction with the broader world through transportation, economy, television, and so forth, has caused Darvills to lose a lot of the individuality it once exhibited. It has now become a part of a larger collective, one that has blended many traits into a more homogenous culture. These people and this community in a sense then “knew their place.” They enjoyed what they had and were not bothered by what they did not have. One might not expect that a seemingly ordinary area would be so complex. It may be likened to a prism, a common piece of crystal that when held to the light showcases a multitude of unexpected elements in color. This light, like Frost’s gold, shines

on the best and brightest of Darvills at its peak. Soon, the light will lose its luster, but, I hope, with this thesis the moment will not be forgotten.

Chapter 5: Bibliography

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Vita

Lisa Vaughan Jordan was born on November 18, 1971, in Richmond, Virginia and is an American citizen. She graduated from Dinwiddie County High School in Dinwiddie, Virginia in 1989. She received her Bachelor of Arts in History and Master of Teaching Social Sciences from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia in 1995. For over ten years, she served in various positions as an instructor and guidance counselor in the public school system of Virginia. At Southside Virginia Community College, she was a part-time adjunct faculty member for over five years. As an intern at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia she worked on several archaeological projects. During the summer of 2010, she worked for the National Park Service at the Petersburg National Battlefield as an interpretive guide. Currently, she is the Director of the Colonial Theatre in South Hill, Virginia in charge of the art gallery, ballroom, and welcome center for the Town and surrounding region.

APPENDIX A – INITIAL LIST OF QUESTIONS

Along with the questions noted here, other questions will be tailored to the knowledge of the subject. Several may be regarding some of the unknown people mentioned in the letters to determine their identity. Others will be selected according to the direct or indirect contact with the Vaughan family. After beginning with basic questions about the interviewee's family and childhood, the interviewer will proceed with the remainder of the questions.

1. What was your (and parents') levels of education? What were your (and your parents') jobs or careers?
2. What were your parents' attitudes toward learning and education?
3. What were your (and your parents') beliefs about work? Religion?
4. How important was agriculture to the Darvills community during the 1965-1967 time period? How many people were directly involved in farming? How many are making a living from it now?
5. What role did Camp Pickett play in the lives of people living in Darvills at this time?
6. How would you describe the economy of the area?
7. What events shaped the community? What was important or valued in the community?
8. Describe the relationship between Irene and Ammon.

9. If someone asked you to define your social class, how would you respond? How would your parents have responded?
10. What impact has living in the rural South had on you?
11. Do you feel that technology was readily available and used in the rural South during this time? What affected its use?

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE RELEASE

You are being asked to participate in an interview in connection with the thesis research being conducted by Lisa Vaughan Jordan of the Department of History at Virginia Commonwealth University. Questions or concerns should be directed to Lisa Vaughan Jordan at 804-605-0034 or jordanlv@vcu.edu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to examine the relationship between a specific family of the rural South and the region and its developments at a similar time period. Oral history interviews will then be combined with archival and textual research to produce a thesis.

PROCEDURES

The interview will take approximately one hour, but may be continued if necessary at a convenient date and time. Prior to the interview, you will have the opportunity to examine the questions that will be asked. Although there are no anticipated risks to your participation in this interview, you can withdraw from participation at any time. You have the opportunity to make special provisions or restrictions. The interview will be either audio taped, video taped or digitally recorded. During the interview, you may request to stop the recording at any time to discuss or clarify how you wish to respond to a question or topic before proceeding.

In the event that you choose to withdraw from participation, any tape made of the interview will be either given to you or destroyed and no transcript will be made of the interview.

BENEFITS

Subject to provisions made in advance of the interview by the participant, upon completion of the interview, the tape and content of the interview belong to Lisa Vaughan Jordan, and the information in the interview can be used by Lisa Vaughan Jordan in any manner determined, including, but not limited to, future use by researchers in presentations and publications.

The audio, video, or digital recording of this interview may be donated to the Dinwiddie Historical Society as a lasting contribution to the history of Southside Virginia. Lastly, you will be provided with a copy of your interview and any resulting works free of charge. The transcription will be made available to you.

If at any time you have questions about your participation as an oral history informant, please contact Dr. John Kneebone, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond VA 23284, at phone number 804-828-9706, or by email at jtkneebone@vcu.edu

Interviewer signature _____

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Interviewee Printed Name _____

Interviewee Signature _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Date _____

You are being asked to participate in an interview in connection with the thesis research being conducted by Lisa Vaughan Jordan of the Department of History at Virginia Commonwealth University. Questions or concerns should be directed to Lisa Vaughan Jordan at 804-605-0034 or jordanlv@vcu.edu

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Interviewer signature



I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Interviewee Printed Name

C. Douglas Cliborne

Interviewee Signature



Address

15920 Continental Rd, McKenney, VA 23872

Phone Number

804-478-4839

Email

docnabby@gmail.com

Date

10/10/10

You are being asked to participate in an interview in connection with the thesis research being conducted by Lisa Vaughan Jordan of the Department of History at Virginia Commonwealth University. Questions or concerns should be directed to Lisa Vaughan Jordan at 804-605-0034 or jordanlv@vcu.edu

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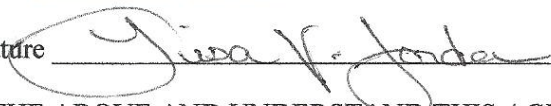
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Interviewer signature



I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Interviewee Printed Name

Gloria A. Cliborne

Interviewee Signature



Address

15920 Continental Road, McKenney, Va 23872

Phone Number

(804) 478-4839

Email

docnabby@gmail.com

Date

10-10-10

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Interviewer signature

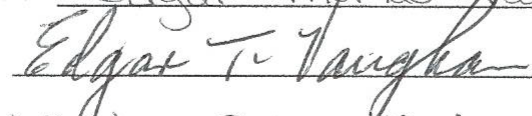


I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Interviewee Printed Name

Edgar Thomas Vaughan

Interviewee Signature



Address

8301 Windsor Drive Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Phone Number

(804) 730-2892

Email

amamawv3@comcast.net

You are being asked to participate in an interview in connection with the thesis research being conducted by Lisa Vaughan Jordan of the Department of History at Virginia Commonwealth University. Questions or concerns should be directed to Lisa Vaughan Jordan at 804-605-0034 or jordanlv@vcu.edu

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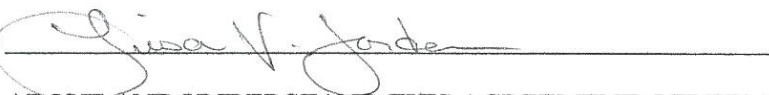
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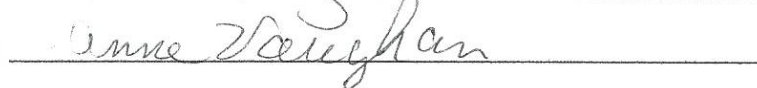


I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Interviewee Printed Name

Anne Vaughan

Interviewee Signature



Address

8301 Windsor Drive Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Phone Number

(804) 730-2892

Email

amamawv3@comcast.net

Date

Sept. 27, 2010